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LIBRARY BY DAY
THEATER BY NIGHT

JULIE MISHLER

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	5
Design Ethos	9
Research	13
Precedent Studies	29
Neighborhood History	47
Building History	53
Existing Building Documents	57
Photographic Studies	65
Programming	73
Design Concept	79
Design Realization	93
Acknowledgments	121
Reflection	123
Works Cited	125

ABSTRACT

MOTIVATION

This project will re-conceive a historic movie theater, honoring the program of the building as it was originally intended, while introducing a new programmatic element: the library. Instead of this large space only being used in the evenings for movie showings, it will now also be a place for the public to gather during the day as a **popular materials** library. This project is an exploration of diversion through literature and cinema. This space will continue to be a landmark in Richmond and a place community members visit on a regular basis.

ISSUE

How do new elements introduced into a historic building respond to the existing ornamentation? How do two different programs meet one another and share a space? What makes for a successful and honorable adaptive reuse of a building? Why is diversion important?

METHODS

The methods used for this project were to study large scale, recently constructed library projects like the Helsinki Central Library Oodi to understand the world’s latest and best strategies in library design

programmatically and architecturally. This project is not on the same scale as these institutions, so a study of recent award-winning branch libraries was relevant as well. An interview was conducted with local designer, Shannon Wray, who was on the team that recently completed two such branch libraries in Central Virginia. Precedent studies were conducted of movie theaters and libraries throughout history.

RESULTS

At new libraries like the Oodi in Helsinki, at least half of the square footage of the library building is no longer dedicated to books and instead dedicated to meeting spaces, maker spaces, art galleries, space for pop up markets, theaters, and play space (Tucker, 2019). The library building itself is an architectural attraction that brings in locals and tourists alike (Krueger, 2019).

CONCLUSION

Reading a book and watching a movie are diversions. A library focused purely on entertainment will be better utilized than a traditional library. A better utilized civic space will lead to greater education, interaction between cultures, community engagement and economic well-being in the community.

DECLARATION

- Honor historic structures and create spaces that are thoughtfully designed for life today.
- Design timeless spaces that seamlessly blend elements of the past, present and future.
- Adaptively reuse public buildings that are not adequately serving the public into spaces that are abuzz.
- Create public spaces that a community can be proud of.

DESIGN ETHOS

DRAMA

This project will be visually pleasing and memorable. Oscar Niemeyer designed a dramatic and beautiful space at the Communist Party Center Paris. Part of what makes this space dramatic is the lighting and the element of surprise in the auditorium that is not evident from the outside. The ceiling of the space is covered with thousands of light-diffusing anodized aluminum blades that create an eye-catching, memorable effect in the room (Pavka, 2018). The Byrd Theater project utilizes the grand scale of the space and engaging material strategies to create a beautiful, dramatic and memorable space.

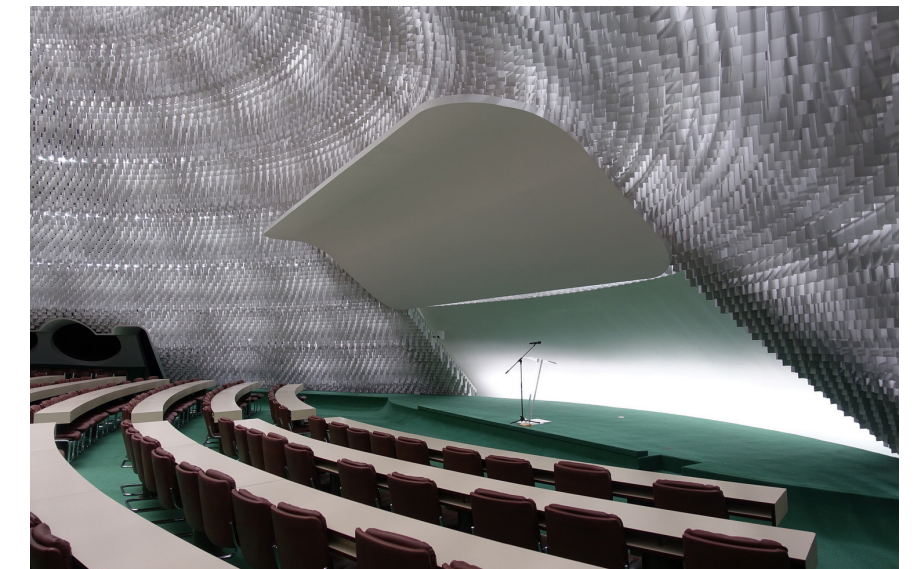


Fig. 1 Communist Party Center Paris



Fig. 2 Fallingwater Desk

CLEVERNESS

The Byrd Theater project utilizes smart, thoughtful solutions to problems. This is how the ideal of 'clever' is defined. Design strategies employed by Frank Lloyd Wright at Fallingwater embody this ideal. Wright's client wanted a larger writing desk in the bedroom but a larger desk would have prevented the ability to have an operable window beside it. Wright did not want to sacrifice the ability to get fresh air in the space and connect with nature so he designed a notch out of the desk so the window could still swing open. Wright's goal at Fallingwater was to bring the outdoors inside and his design of corner-less windows was a clever way of doing that. The edges of the large windows in the living room are hidden behind the walls so it appears that they have no edges. It gives the illusion that there is no glass or division from the outdoors at all.

ADAPTIVE REUSE

Adaptive reuse is an important element in sustainable design and the fight against climate change. Giving new life to unused or underused buildings should be the priority before tearing something down or building something completely new. This project will creatively reuse an existing structure while honoring the building's history. The SESC Pompeia factory designed by Lina Bo Bardi in Sao Paulo, Brazil is an excellent example of adaptive reuse. She had the opportunity to build anew for this project but chose not to. She made it clear that the existing structure was no longer a factory by adding unusually shaped openings with red mesh metal window coverings (Taschen, 2015).



Fig. 3 SESC Pompeia

RESEARCH

This project will re-conceive the historic Byrd movie theater to respectfully honor the history and program of the building as it was originally intended while introducing a new programmatic element: the library. The Byrd Theatre is in the Carytown neighborhood of Richmond, Virginia. Carytown is one of the oldest shopping districts in the city and the Byrd is one of the largest buildings in the neighborhood. They are both iconic emblems of the city of Richmond then and now.

On most days, while shoppers walk along the busy sidewalks of Carytown during the day, the doors to the Byrd Theatre are closed. The building is currently only open limited times of day for movie showings and sits empty much of the rest of the day. As such a large and important building in the Carytown neighborhood, it could be much more fully utilized. The Byrd is surrounded by residential neighborhoods and retail foot traffic that would benefit from easy access to a library. This is where

the idea was born to introduce a **popular materials** library by day while maintaining a theater by night. A popular materials library is a library that features current, high-demand materials like best sellers and new releases with adequate copies to meet demand (Wray, 2019). The content is primarily for adults and a children’s section is not available in this branch.

Watching a movie and reading a book are diversions and temporary escapes from one’s reality. As a result, designing a space for both of these activities is an appropriate programmatic complement to one another. The Byrd Theatre building lends itself well to an immersive experience because it is a large almost-windowless box without sight lines out to daily life outside. Diversion can blur the line between learning and entertainment. This project will create an environment where the story in the book (an individual experience) or the story in the movie (a collective experience) can take center stage.

FINANCIAL MOTIVATIONS

The Byrd Theatre is owned by the Byrd Theatre Foundation. The Foundation is a 503(c)(3) not-for-profit organization and thus relies on donations for its funding ("The Byrd Theatre & Foundation," n.d.). As a result, it has limited financial capabilities and must rely on donations for maintenance and to complete the next phase of restoration. The Foundation exists to preserve the theatre. This project proposes to rehabilitate the building instead. Rather than strictly maintain the building to continue to be in its 1928 original condition, this project proposes to alter and add to the historic character of the building ("Four Approaches to the Treatment of Historic Properties," n.d.). Combining the Byrd Theatre with a public library could be an innovative way to **preserve and protect both** the historic theatre and support the Richmond Public Library system.

The Richmond Public Library budget took a 16% cut in the 2016-2017 fiscal year and a 9% cut in 2017-2018 fiscal year (Harrison, 2017). The result is the inability to obtain new books, e-books, electronic databases and adequate staff. The Richmond public libraries are falling behind other more modern libraries in terms of services and innovation (Harrison, 2017). **The average age of a book at the RPL Main Library is 36 years old.** Richmond City has a \$6 million library budget and in comparison, neighboring Henrico County has a budget of more than triple at \$18.8 million (Harrison, 2017). The combination of both the RPL resources and the Byrd Theatre Foundation resources with revenue-generating movie screenings and events and a café/bar may give the building the appropriate financial resources it needs to thrive for another hundred years.

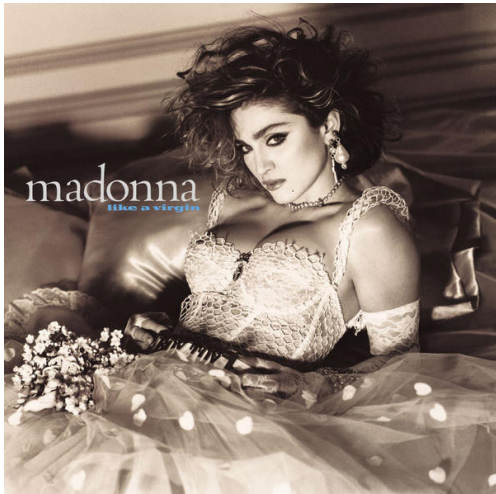


Fig. 4,5 Ronald Reagan was President and Madonna's *Like a Virgin* album was just released thirty-six years ago; the average age of a book at Richmond's Main Library branch.

IMPORTANCE OF ENTERTAINMENT

This project is a place for diversion through literature and cinema. It's a place for entertainment. It's all about holding one's attention for fun, pleasure or delight. According to Shay Sayre's *Entertainment and Society Influences, Impacts and Innovations*, "we need entertainment to maintain our feeling of belonging and our feeling of well-being." The average American spends more money on entertainment than on gasoline, household furniture and clothing (Sayre, 2010). Much of human activity is surrounding entertainment and different people find different things entertaining. As a result, it is an important facet of life that should be celebrated and this project intends to do just that.

Entertainment comes in many forms including reading and performance (theater, cinema, dance, television) but also music, games, comedy, sport, shopping, animals and architecture. Entertainment is oftentimes associated with amusement but it can be serious and intellectually stimulating as well (Sayre, 2010). The forms of entertainment can be public or private, scheduled or spontaneous and this project will provide adequate space for each.

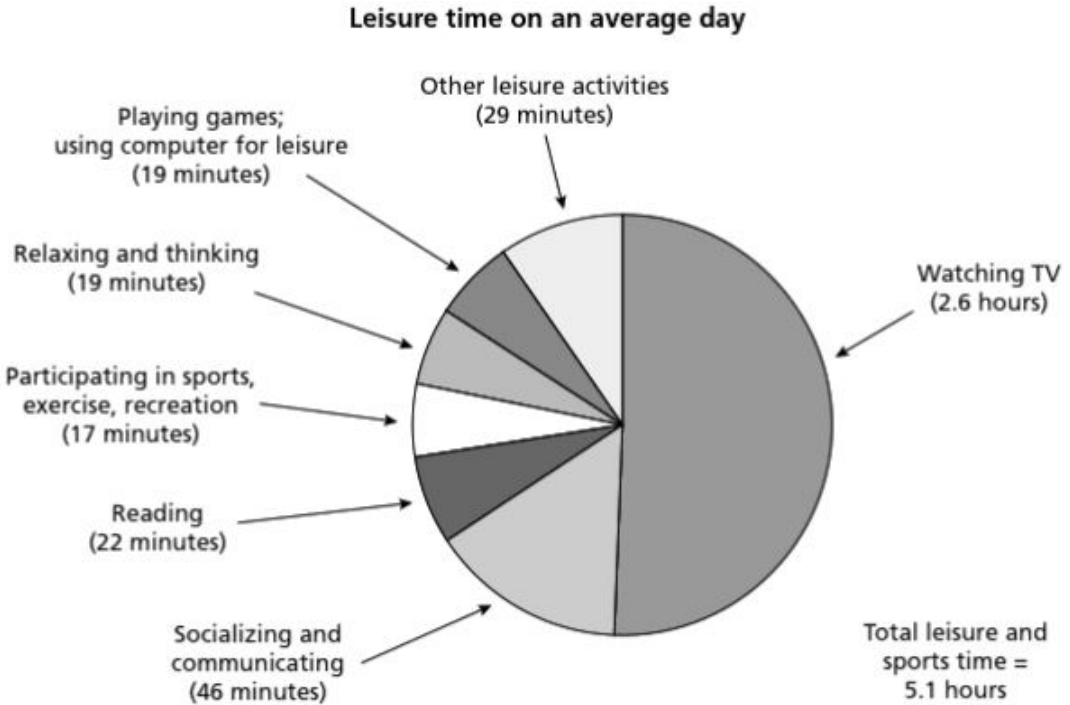


Fig. 6 Forms of Leisure Time for the Average American over 15 years old

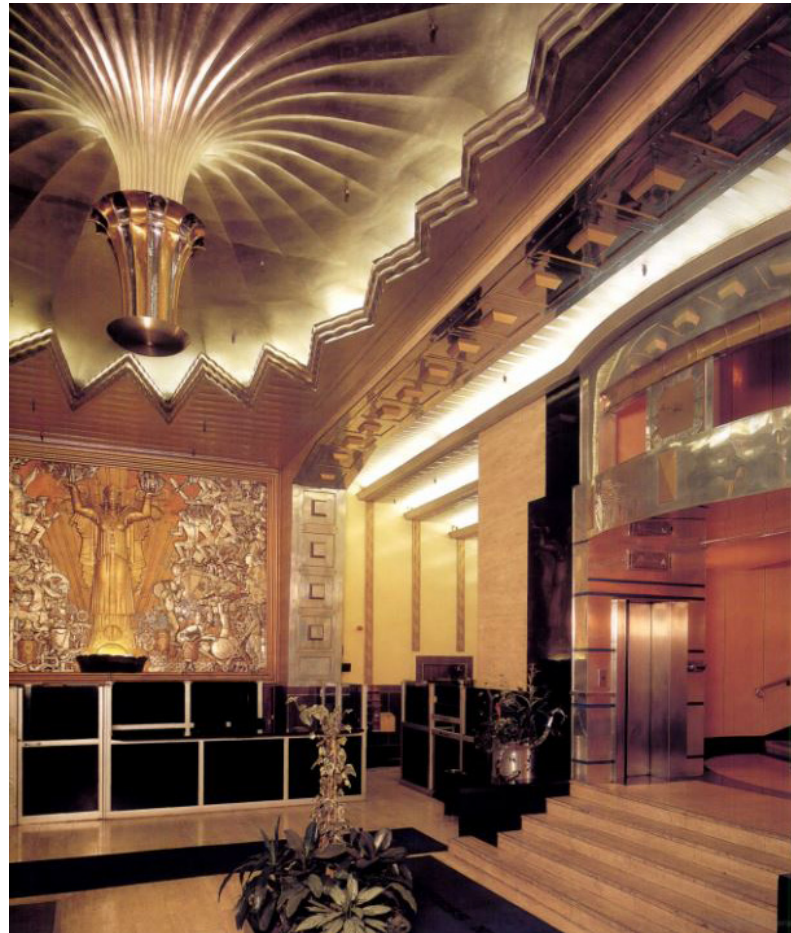


Fig. 7 Example of Original Art Deco Design: the Daily Express Building, 1931



Fig. 8 Example of a Contemporary Take on Art Deco: The Warehouse Hotel, 2017

1920'S INTERIORS

The Byrd Theatre was designed and built in the 1920's. Many of the existing Byrd Theatre interior elements are in the Art Deco style, which is characterized as the decorative style created by French designers in the period between the two world wars (Allwright, 1997). Art Deco and cinema heavily borrowed from each other during this time including material palettes and dramatic lighting techniques.

The interiors of this period are ornamental and depart from the International Style. Art Deco design uses zig zags, bold colors, sunbursts, animals, chevrons, geometric shapes, feathers, plants, black and white checkerboard, jagged edges, and exotic motifs. Commonly used materials are concrete, brick, stone, wood and wood veneers, shiny fabrics, mirrors, metals (copper, brass, bronze, aluminum, nickel, chrome) and glass (Allwright, 1997). The updated design of the Byrd continues to utilize these motifs and materials but with a modern take so that the new elements can seamlessly integrate with the original details of the building.

Much of the Byrd Theatre's surrounding residential neighborhood was built in the 1920's. The Kohler Company advertised colored bathroom fixtures during this time which were widely used and can still be found in some residential bathrooms today. A modern take on the colored bathroom fixtures is a heavily colored wall and tile with white fixtures.



Fig. 9 Kohler Company's 1928 Brochure "Color Charm Enters the Bathroom"

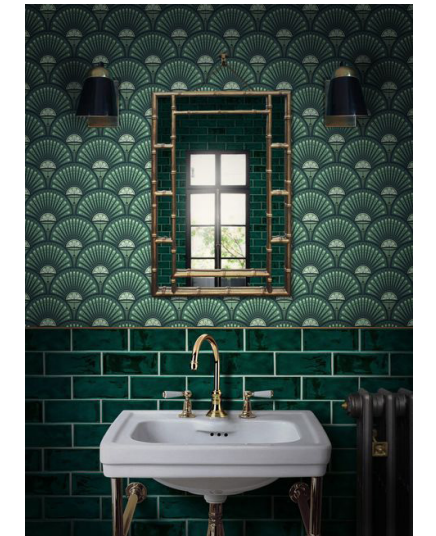


Fig. 10 Contemporary Interpretation of Kohler's "Color Charm Enters the Bathroom"



Fig. 11 Main Street Station and Train Shed Rendering

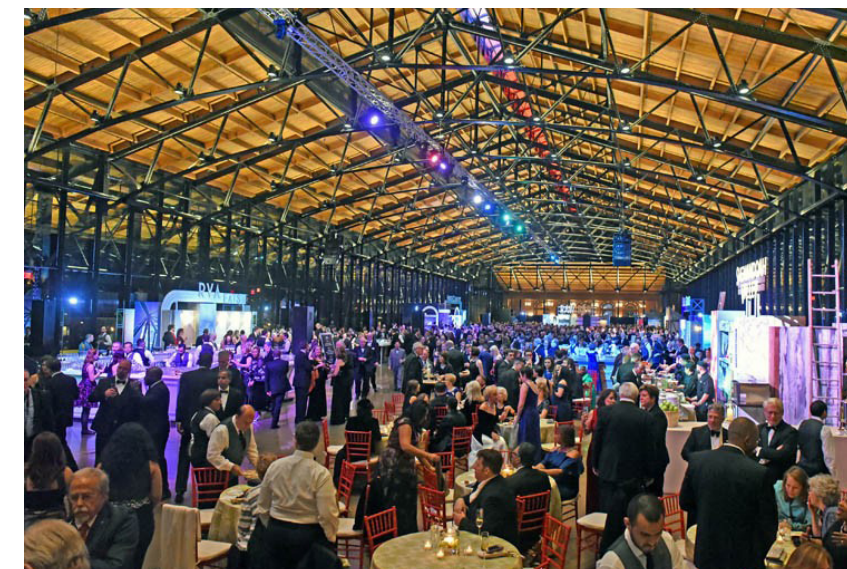


Fig. 12 Main Street Station Train Shed Event



Fig. 13 Science Museum of Virginia

PRESERVATION BY INTRODUCING A NEW PROGRAM:

MAIN STREET STATION

This project at the Byrd Theatre is not the first to take an aggressive approach to protect a beloved building. The Main Street Station and Train Shed in Richmond, Virginia's Shockoe Bottom neighborhood is another such project. The building was constructed in 1901 as a train station and the grand gateway to the city of Richmond when train travel was a very popular mode of transportation ("Main Street Station and Trainshed," n.d.). The train station was in operation until 1975 when a decline in rail passenger use forced it to close. It was rehabilitated in 2014 to be a train station again on the exterior and an event space on the interior. The lower level is a tourism welcome office as well.

The rehabilitation was designed by SMBW Architects and paid for with \$91.5 million of federal and state funds (Slipek, 2018). Now the space hosts weddings and black-tie events while a passenger train can simultaneously whisk you away to Miami, Montreal or anywhere in between. Like the Byrd Theatre, the clock tower of the Main Street Station is an iconic emblem of the city of Richmond deemed worthy of preservation and protection.

The renovation to the Science Museum of Virginia is another example of a train station reused as another purpose: a museum. The Science Museum was also bought with state funds. As a result of these rehabilitations, the Main Street Station and Science Museum of Virginia station did not suffer the same demise as the New York City Pennsylvania Station, which was torn down in 1963. Instead, they still stand today but in another capacity.



Fig. 14 Crunch Gym at Alhambra Theater

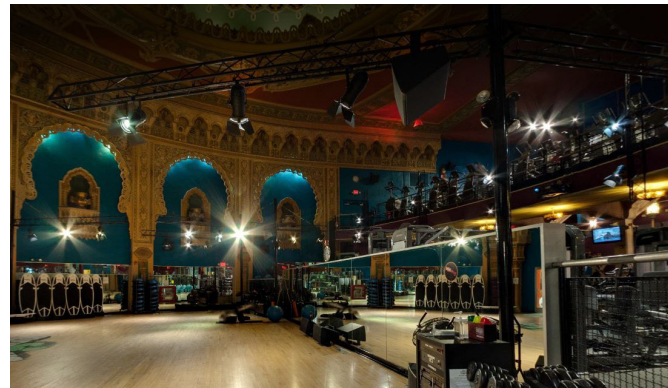


Fig. 15 Crunch Gym at Alhambra Theater

PRESERVATION BY INTRODUCING A NEW PROGRAM:

ALHAMBRA THEATER GYM

A project that took an aggressive approach to protect a beloved building and is similar in program, vintage and scale to the Byrd Theatre is the Alhambra Theater in San Francisco, California. The Alhambra Theater was built two years before the Byrd Theatre in 1926 and is roughly the same size (Asher, 2016). It was built in the Moorish Revival Style by the architecture firm Miller & Pflueger. In 1998, the Alhambra Theater suffered from poor attendance and financial losses and was forced to close. In 2006, the building was then revived in an unconventional way: a gym.

Much of the interior detail has been preserved and the gym still shows movies on the big screen to gym members while 80 cardio machines look on from below (Asher, 2016). The projection room was converted to a yoga studio and behind the screen is a spin studio. The Crunch Gym rehabilitated the building and allowed it to still be a functioning space that can be entered and used and appreciated every day. It is primarily a gym but it still shows movies and occasionally hosts neighborhood events and art exhibitions. Locals say they think the project was a success and they like working out at the gym because it has the magic of an old theater.



Fig. 16 Hunter Bar



Fig. 17 Hunter Bar

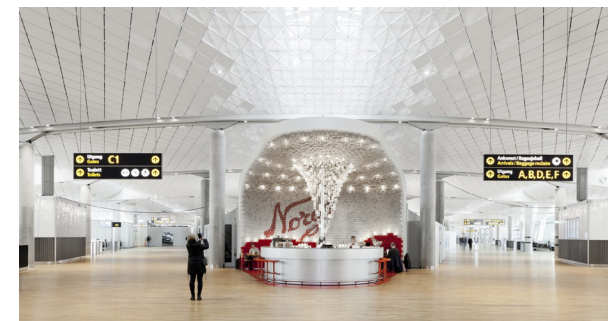


Fig. 18 Norgesglaset Bar

MULTIPLE PROGRAMS, ONE ROOF

Introducing a library program while maintaining a theater program at the Byrd requires a study of how two programs meet under one roof. The Hunter Bar at the Oslo airport in Norway designed by Snohetta architects is an example of two programs under one roof: a café/bar program within an airport program.

The Hunter Bar is enclosed and cannot be entered by customers. It is surrounded by the airport program on all sides but takes two different approaches to how it meets the airport program. On the front side of the bar is a hard edge formed by a sharp, chest-high counter. The staff stand behind the counter and customers or airport travelers passing by are on the other side. This is a clearer division than the other sides of the bar that have built-in bench seating and tables for customers to dine. This softer edge with the airport program creates a fuzzier, less clearly defined edge.

The Oslo airport is also home to the Norgesglaset Bar. It is another example of a bar program existing within an airport program. The Norgesglaset Bar has a hard, front edge that juts out into the airport program. It can be entered by customers on either the right or left side while the back of the bar butts up against a wall. Since the bar juts into the airport program, it has a canopy covering its interior space, to create protection and balance against the busy airport program. Despite the hard, front edge of the bar, it is an inviting space due to the dramatic wall and ceiling display made of Norgesglaset jars.

Libraries themselves have many programs within them but throughout history always have at least these two key programs: a space to store books and a space to read books. A study of three well known libraries yields a variety of approaches to how these two programs should meet or exist within the same building.



Fig. 19 Vyborg Library

The Alvar Aalto-designed Vyborg Library in Vyborg, Russia built in 1935 handles the meeting of reading space and book space with a less clearly defined edge. He uses levels, furniture and glass to divide the programs rather than walls.



Fig. 20 Mount Angel Abbey Library

The Mount Angel Abbey Library in Benedict, Oregon was a later project by Alvar Aalto built in 1970. This space further integrates the reading program into the book storage program blurring any clear distinction between the two.



Fig. 21 Jacob & Wilhelm Grimm Library

The Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm library designed by Max Dudler that opened in 2009 at Humboldt University in Berlin, Germany is a more recent design that takes a rigid approach to how the two programs meet. The central atrium reading room is separated from the adjacent book storage by an interior wall perforated by a uniform series of windows. Additional reading space lines the outer perimeter of the building with a less severe division from the book stacks.

PRINT IS NOT DEAD

Some may argue that in 2020 with the advent of e-books and audio books, there is little need to have print books in a library anymore. This is not the case. Print books are still the most popular format for reading (Perrin, 2019). In a Pew Research study, 65% of American adults said they had read a print book in the last year. Only 7% of Americans responded that they exclusively read books via e-book or listening to audio books. According to the same Pew Research study, 27% of American adults said they have not consumed a book in any format in the last year (print, e-book or otherwise). This finding may indicate that the addition of a theater component to a library would be a welcome new programmatic element for those individuals who are not currently readers. This mash up of programs may also encourage non-readers to pick up a book and read by being in a book and reading-filled environment.

Print books are not dead and neither are traditional libraries. After analyzing numerous projects throughout the 20th and 21st centuries, Nolan Lushington concludes in *Libraries: A Design Manual*, that changes in library function (the introduction of new technologies) does not always necessitate the need for a change in building form. Recent examples like the Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm library exemplify that classical special arrangements are still viable in the digital age (Lushington, 2018).

The mashing of a library program and movie theater programs may be a well-suited pair to create immersive escapes from everyday life. The building is underutilized today because it stands empty until movie show times. The combination of a public library program and a movie theater program into the Byrd Theatre in Carytown could protect and promote both Richmond Public Libraries and the historic theater.

100 YEARS OF LIBRARIES

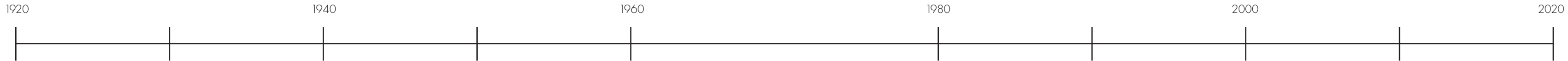


Fig. 22 High Park Branch Library, 1921



Fig. 23 Richmond Main Branch Library, 1930



Fig. 24 Eureka Valley Branch Library, 1961



Fig. 25 Richmond Main Branch Library, 1972



Fig. 26 Charlottesville Central Branch Library, 2003



Fig. 27 Libbie Mill Branch Library, 2015

100 YEARS OF MOVIE THEATERS

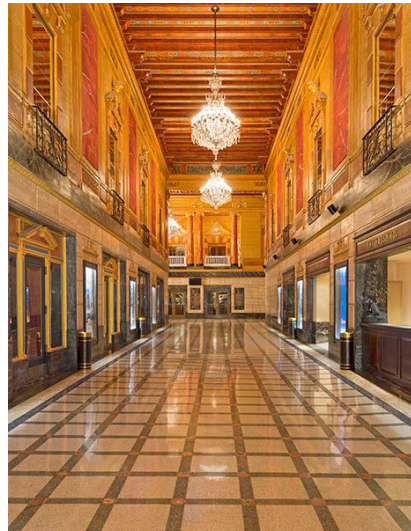


Fig. 28 Saenger Theater, 1927



Fig. 29 Providence Performing Art Center, 1928



Fig. 30 Drive In Movie Theater, 1961



Fig. 31 AMC Theater, 1999



Fig. 32 CineBistro Theater, 2017

FURNITURE PRECEDENT STUDY



Fig. 33 Varina Area Library

VARINA AREA LIBRARY

Architect: Quinn Evans & Tappe Architects
Completed 2016
Henrico, Virginia



Fig. 34 Varina Library Soft Seating with a View



Fig. 35 Varina Library "Alone" Soft Seating



Fig. 36 "Alone With Others" Rocking Chairs with a View

The Varina Area Library is a 43,000 square foot branch library in a neighboring county to Richmond, Henrico County. The new construction library replaced a small, outdated branch in the area. The shape of the library is drawn from that of a tobacco barn which is reflective of the culture and history of Varina. Large windows fill the space with natural light and provide views to the outdoors. There is space for individual and group study and adaptable furniture throughout the space. The project won the national AIA/ALA Library Building Award in 2017 (Wray, 2019).

This project is relevant to the proposed Byrd Theater Library because it is a newly built branch library in Central Virginia, which the Byrd Theater project is as well. The main takeaway from Varina Area Library project is related to the furniture used throughout the spaces. This is a study in the mixing of furniture and the furniture needs of a modern-day branch library.

These images show the variety of furniture throughout the library. The furniture changes based on the context of the space, the ceiling height and the program. Andrea Quilici of Quinn Evans explained that the furniture choices reflect three distinct categories of spaces in the library: **alone, alone with others, and with others** (Quilici, 2020).

The "alone" spaces are furnished with high-backed solitary chairs with pull up tables or with chairs and cocktail-style tables arranged one-on-one. The "alone with others" spaces may use seating facing the same direction like rocking chairs overlooking the view to create private but together spaces. This type of space can also be found in the Quiet Study Rooms where people are all working in the same space either at hard tables and chairs or lounge chairs.



Fig. 37 "With Others" Mixed Furniture Types Side-by-Side

The voluminous space at the entrance of the building is a "with others" space filled with built-in stadium seating benches for hanging out and for watching movies on a drop-down screen. These benches are flexible for use however the users see fit. Other "with others" furnishings including soft seating surrounding a single table or a hard table and chairs in a study room.

It's not uncommon to find "with others" seating beside a cluster of "alone" seats at the Varina Library. Andrea Quilici explained that the variety of furniture is deliberate because people sit comfortably in different ways. His strategy for mixing furniture was to not mix styles of furniture but do mix types of furniture (Quilici, 2020)



Fig. 38 "With Others" Stadium Seating

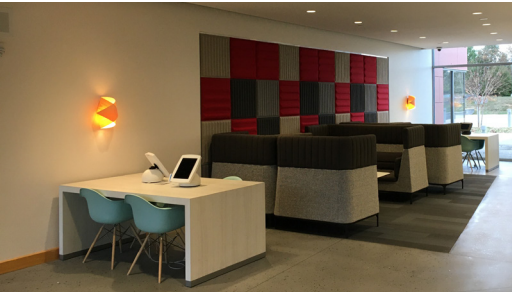


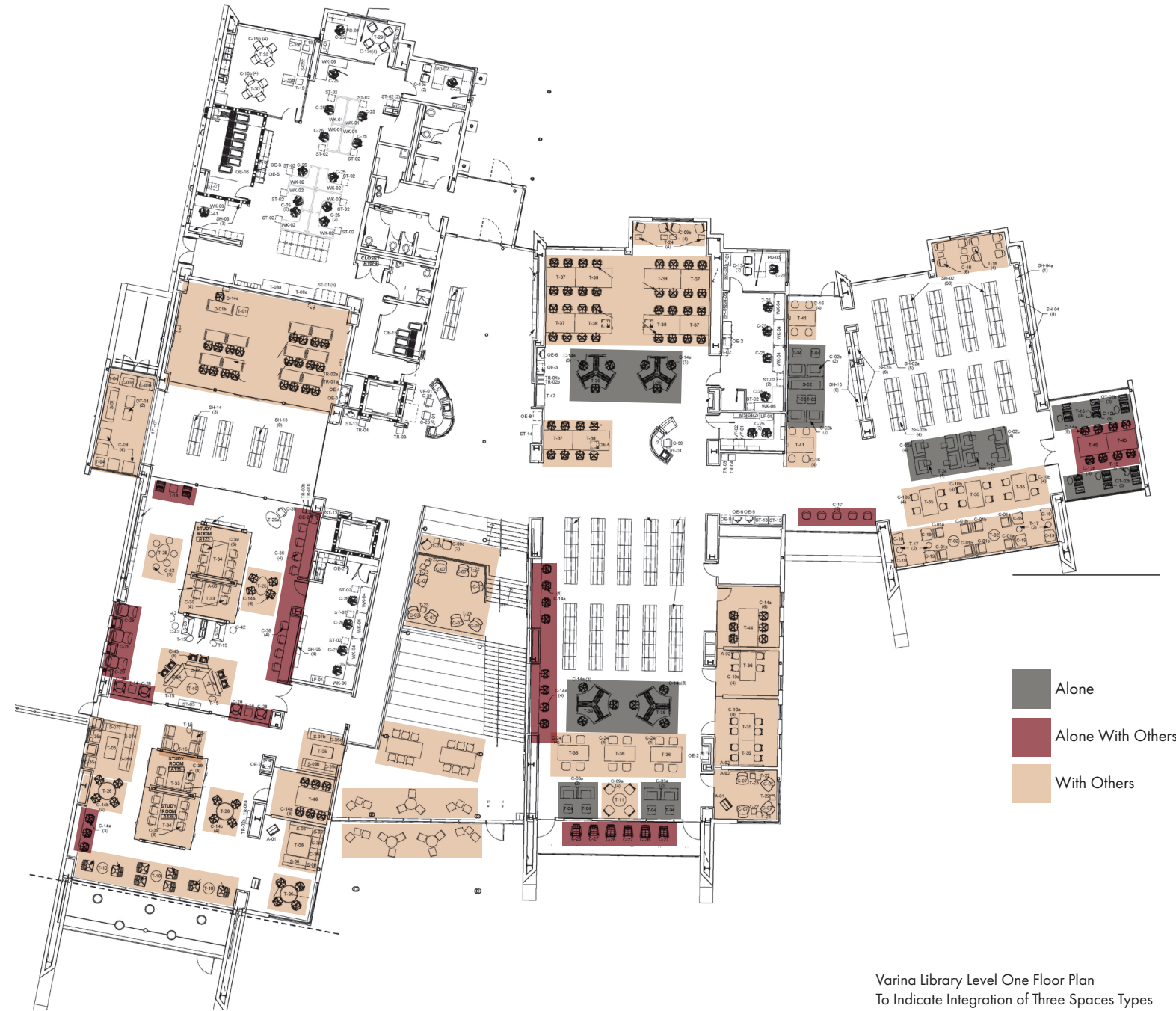
Fig. 39 Lower Ceiling "Alone" Soft Seating



Fig. 40 Varina Library "With Others" Soft Seating



Fig. 41 "Alone With Others" Mixed Furniture Types Side-by-Side



Varina Library Level One Floor Plan
To Indicate Integration of Three Spaces Types



Varina Library Level One Floor Plan
To Indicate variety of furniture types for library visitors

CHARACTER PRECEDENT STUDY

CENTRAL LIBRARY DELFT

Architect: Mecanoo
Completed 1997
Delft, Netherlands



Fig. 42 Central Library Delft

JACOB AND WILHELM GRIMM LIBRARY

Architect: Max Dudler
Completed 2009
Berlin, Germany

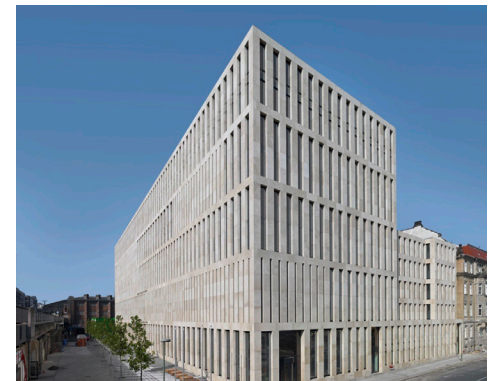


Fig. 43 Grimm Library

The Byrd is the tallest building in Carytown giving it clear hierarchy and monumentality. The newly designed interior should reflect that as well. These precedents study formal and informal approaches to a monumental reading room and its seating.

The Central Library reading area has a monumental character with hospitable informality (Lushington, 2018). This informal character is achieved through color, material and shape. The large, bold blue wall, the stainless steel ceiling and columns and the rounded central pyramid standing precariously on “legs” all contribute to the hospitable informality of the space.



Fig. 44 Central Library Delft Reading Area



Fig. 45 Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm Reading Room

In contrast, the Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm Library reading room at Humboldt University has a modern sense of monumentality but with a very formal character. The formal character is achieved through a strict order from the structural grid made of simple rectangular openings along the interior walls, exterior walls, partitions and ceilings. The placement of the furniture is rectangular and in accordance with the rhythmic grid. Symmetry and a very limited material palette contribute to the overall formal aesthetic character of the building.

The character of the space is important because it may impact the behavior and feelings of its users. For instance, the informal Central Library Delft is likely to be a more lively and noisy environment while the formal Grimm Library may be relatively quiet and less active.

FINISHES PRECEDENT STUDY



Fig. 46 Bon Bon Bar

NORDA RESTAURANT & BON BON BAR

Architect: Spik Studios
Completed 2017
Gothenburg, Sweden



Fig. 47 Bon Bon Bar Entryway

The Bon Bon Bar and Norda Restaurant are located within the Clarion Hotel in Gothenburg, Sweden and renovated in 2017. The building was built in 1925 and served as the main post office of Gothenburg for decades. The Bon Bon Bar is a 3,000 square foot space directly adjacent to the Norda Restaurant on the second floor of the hotel (*Bon Bon Bar*, 2017).

The contemporary use of 1920's-inspired finishes in these spaces creates a thoughtful balance between historical and contemporary elements. Both spaces utilize monochromatic color palettes with gold accents to tie them together. The spaces butt up to one another and the color palettes delineate between bar and restaurant. The Bon Bon Bar uses the same patterned pink and oxblood velvet and carpet on the floor, walls and furniture in the entryway (*Bon Bon Bar*, 2017). The scale of the pattern is angular and its application everywhere is distinctly modern. The use of velvet is a nod to the 1920's vintage of the building.

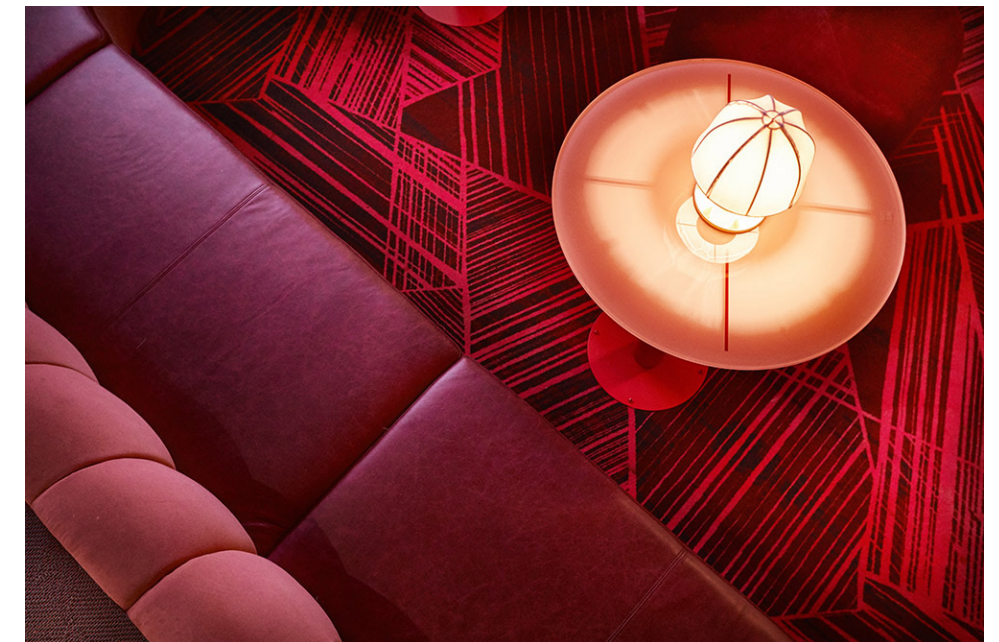


Fig. 48 Bon Bon Bar finishes and furniture palette



Fig. 49 Norda Restaurant gold and brown leather accents

Spik Studios **balanced existing finishes with new finishes** to highlight both and overwhelm neither. The existing ceiling, windows and wood wall paneling were left untouched while new flooring, furniture and casework finishes update and enliven the spaces. The new elements, like the curving sofa in pink velvet and oxblood leather in the Bon Bon Bar, follow the rhythm of the existing windows to complement the historic structure.

The monochromatic nature of the Norda Restaurant color palette is not quite as overt as the Bon Bon Bar while still being a clearly blue-green palette. This was achieved through a mix of furniture finishes and colors within the same blue-green family. Brown leather and gold accents provide bits of relief from the blue-green. A rich collection of textures from soft velvet to glossy tabletops and buttery leather to hard tile floors make for dynamic and inviting spaces. It is a successful interpretation of 1920's style through a contemporary lens.



Fig. 50 Norda Restaurant blue-green palette

This new Byrd Theatre library takes the same approach to finishes as the Bon Bon Bar by balancing select existing finishes, textures and palette with contemporary additions. Spaces are delineated by color palette and/or elevation change instead of walls. Many of the contemporary finishes are selected because of their nod toward the 1920's vintage of the building and existing finish elements. Like the Bon Bon Bar, the existing rhythm of the building is followed when introducing new elements for a cohesive integration of new and old.



Fig. 51 Bon Bon Bar's new built elements align with existing elements

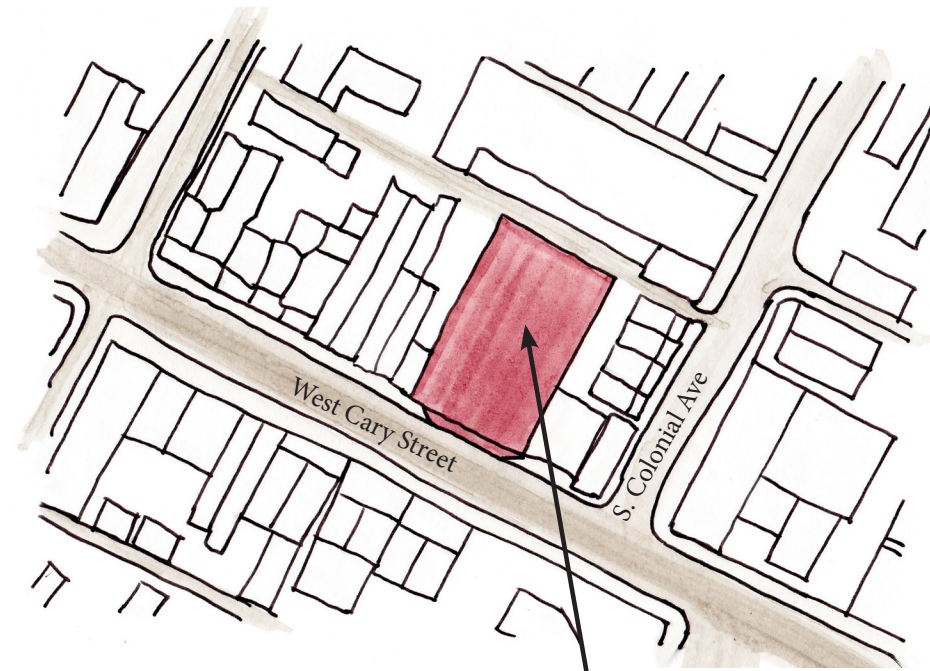
CARYTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD HISTORY



Fig. 52 Busy streets and sidewalks in Carytown

Carytown is a busy retail district with 230 predominantly locally owned businesses operating out of historic retail storefronts. Most of these buildings are similar in scale: 2-stories with narrow front facades. They densely line either edge of Cary St. with little to no space between the sidewalk and front door.

Carytown is the 2800-3500 blocks of West Cary Street. The Byrd Theatre building is a key member of its neighborhood although it lacks similar architectural character to the surrounding structures. What the Byrd has in common with its neighbors is that many of the buildings were built in the 1920s and 1930s.



2800 Block West Cary St Site Map



Richmond Vicinity Map



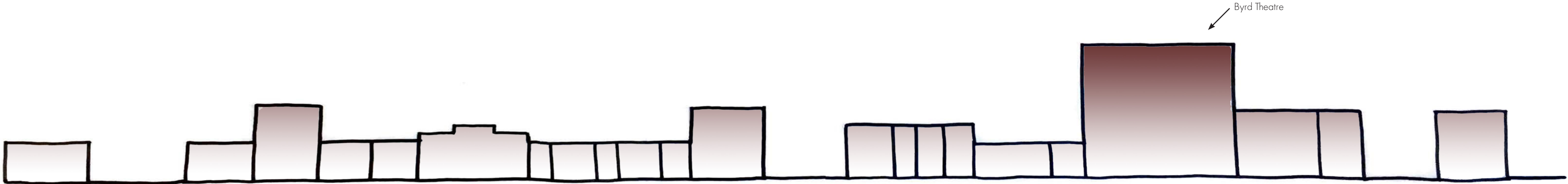
Fig. 53 Shops and restaurants of Carytown

Despite their similar scale and dense proximity to one another, there is a great deal of variety in the buildings in Carytown. The buildings have different styles, materials, colors and roof lines. The common theme among most buildings is brick construction. The Byrd is brick but an aberration in scale from the architectural norm in the rest of Carytown. Its large footprint and 4-story front façade give it clear hierarchy in the neighborhood. No other structure in Carytown is as tall.

Carytown is bounded by Arthur Ashe Boulevard to the East, the Downtown Expressway to the South, Thompson St and Interstate-195 to the West and Ellwood Ave to the North. Carytown is a busy hub of activity centered along heavily trafficked two-lane, one-way West Cary Street.



Fig. 54 Street art across from the Byrd Theatre in Carytown



Roof-line sketch of Carytown highlighting the scale of the Byrd relative to the surrounding buildings from South Belmont Ave to South Colonial Ave

Cary Street is lined with parallel parking and pedestrian sidewalks on either side. The busiest cross streets are Belmont Ave, Sheppard St and Nansemond St. The Byrd marquee is a landmark in Carytown. Nearby and neighborhood points of interest are the VMFA, Kroger, the Daily Kitchen patio and the Byrd Theatre itself.

The dense collection of retail storefronts in Carytown relative to the surrounding neighborhoods makes it an ideal place for a library. Opening up the Byrd as a library by day would better take advantage of the heavy retail foot traffic that passes by its front doors every day.



Map of the Museum District/Carytown/Fan District marking each retail establishment to illustrate the concentration of retail storefronts in Carytown

BUILDING HISTORY



Fig. 55 Byrd Theatre Front Facade 1936



Fig. 56 Byrd Theatre Orchestra 1928



Fig. 57 Byrd Theatre Concessions 1941

The Byrd Theatre opened its doors on Christmas Eve 1928 with a full sound system when talking movies were just being introduced. Movie theaters in the 1920s and 30s were an affordable escape from the Great Depression. The architect of the Byrd was Fred Bishop and the interior designer was Arthur Brunet Studios in New York. The building is on the National Register of Historic Places and was named for the founder of the city of Richmond, William Byrd II (Schall-Vess, 2019).

It is a 15,876 square foot, brick masonry construction building in the Italian Renaissance style. The style is evident in the flat roof, symmetrical façade, masonry construction and impressive size. The second floor



Fig. 58 Byrd Theatre Mezzanine 1950

balcony is a cantilever over the orchestra seating below, which was very innovative at the time (Schall-Vess, 2019).

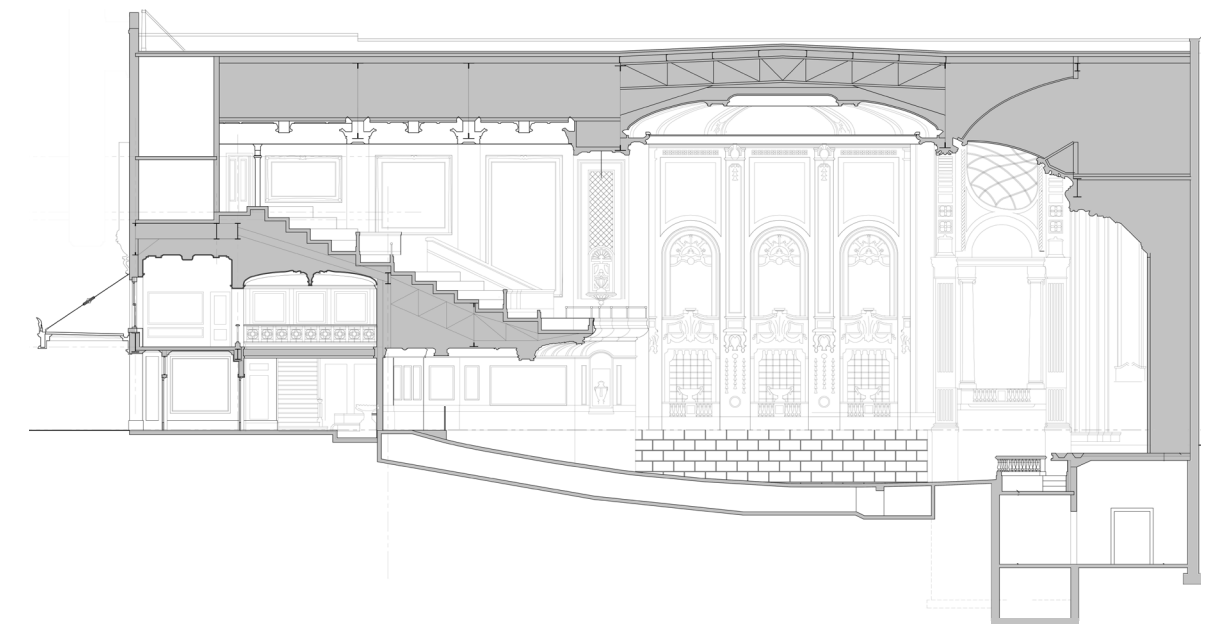
The theater seats 1,396 people and has a lavish interior with 9 chandeliers, marble-clad walls, hand-painted murals and velvet drapes. The grand chandelier in the auditorium was built by Union Electric of Richmond and contains 4,000 hand-cut crystals, 300 bulbs in 4 colors and weighs two tons (Schall-Vess, 2019). All of these features of the building's interior remain today.

The building program has never changed. It was built as a theater and continues to be used that way today. The only considerable changes that have been made to the building itself since 1928 are the replacement of the

lobby fountain with a concession stand in 1940 and the removal and replacement of the blade and marquee on the front façade in 1971. An element that has not changed since 1928 is the Mighty Wurlitzer Organ that was custom made for the space. It has 17 ranks of pipes and a complete percussion section and today is played every Saturday night by Bob Gullledge before the evening's movie begins (Schall-Vess, 2019).

The Byrd Theatre is an iconic emblem of the city of Richmond (The Byrd Theatre Foundation, 2019). Generations of Richmonders and visitors to Carytown have enjoyed the diversion that the movie theater provided in such an opulent and special atmosphere.

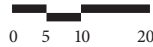
EXISTING BUILDING DOCUMENTS



Byrd Theatre Existing Building Section



Byrd Theatre Existing First Floor Plan



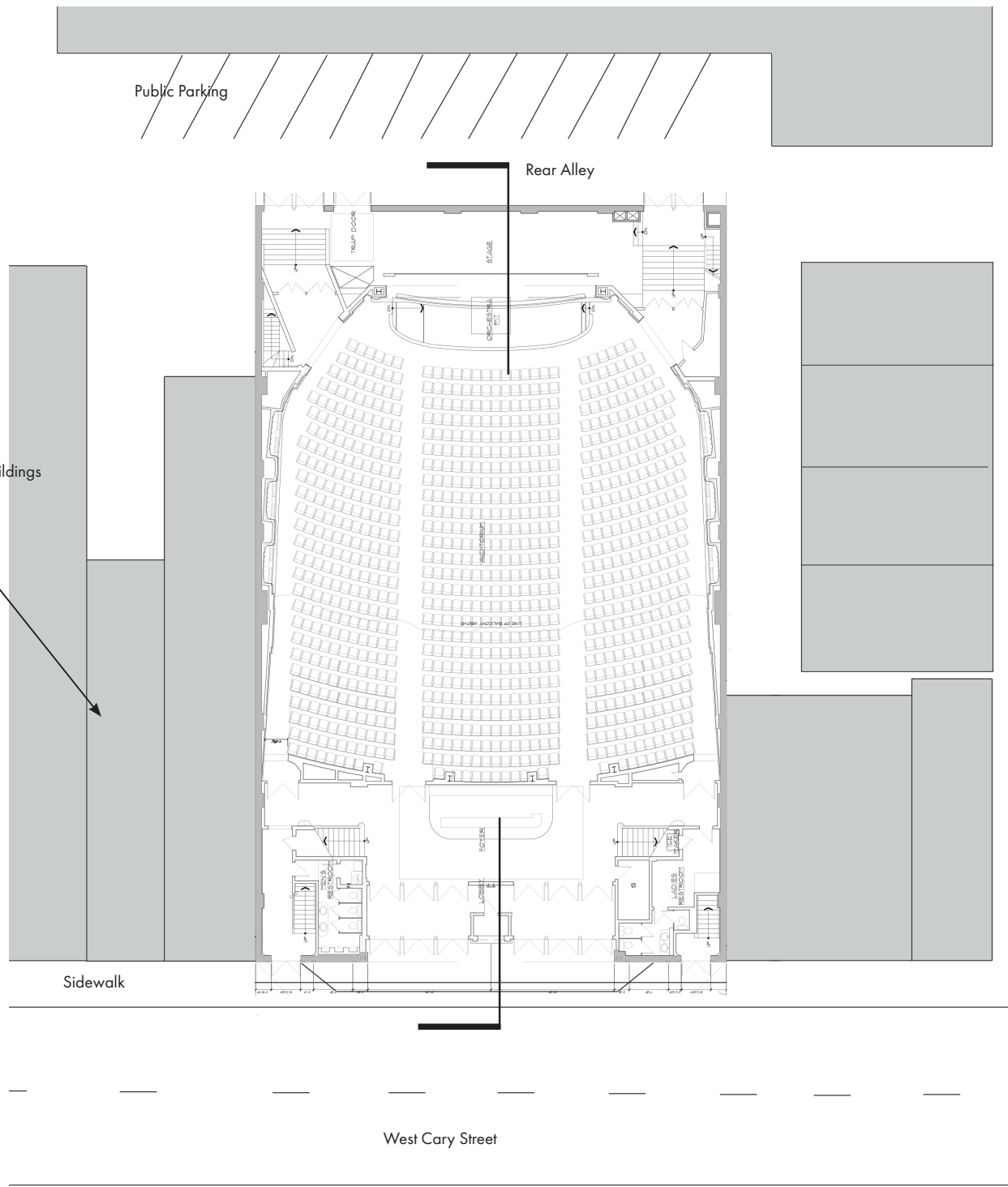
Adjacent Buildings

Public Parking

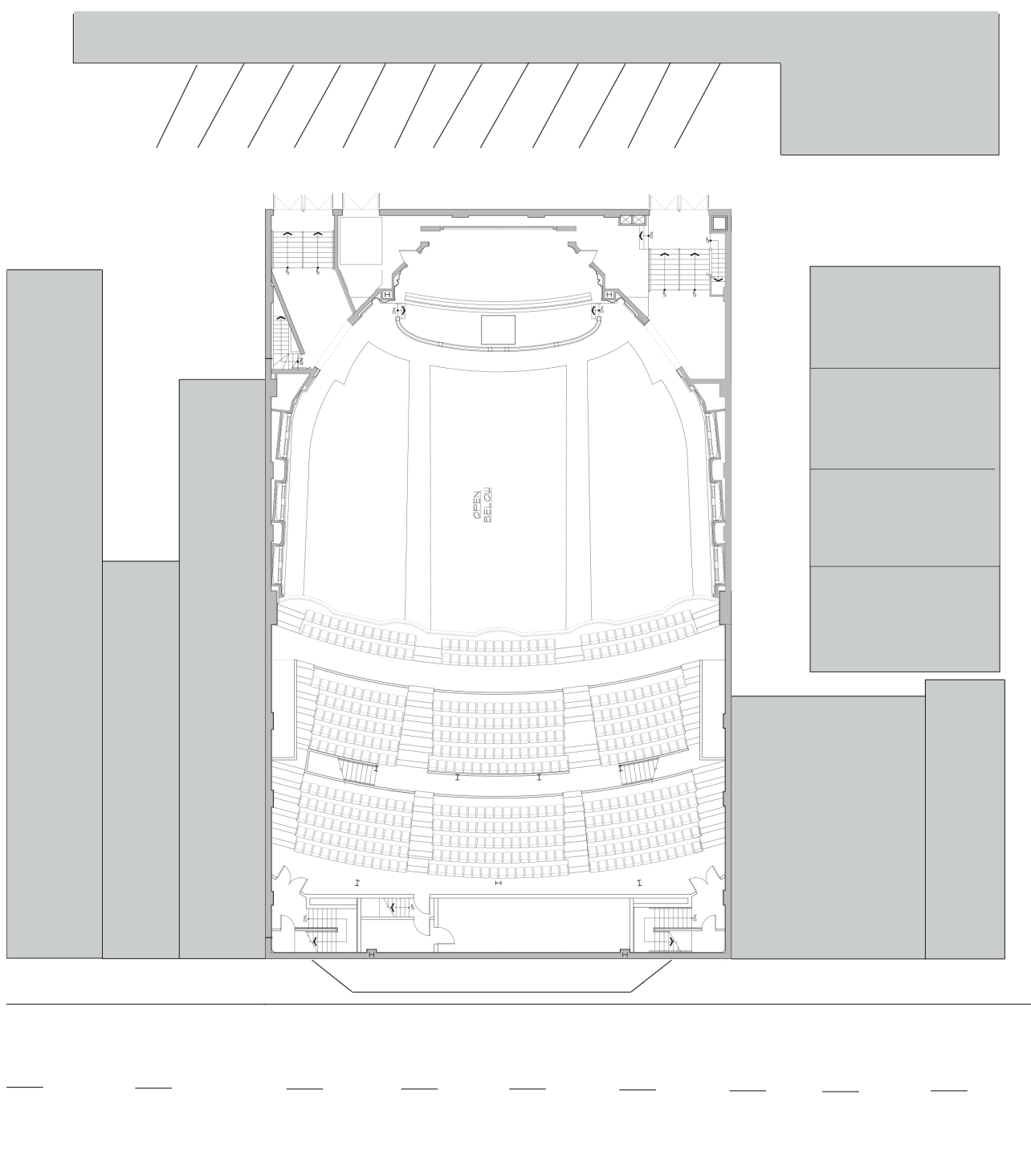
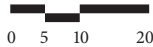
Rear Alley

Sidewalk

West Cary Street



Byrd Theatre Existing Second Floor Plan



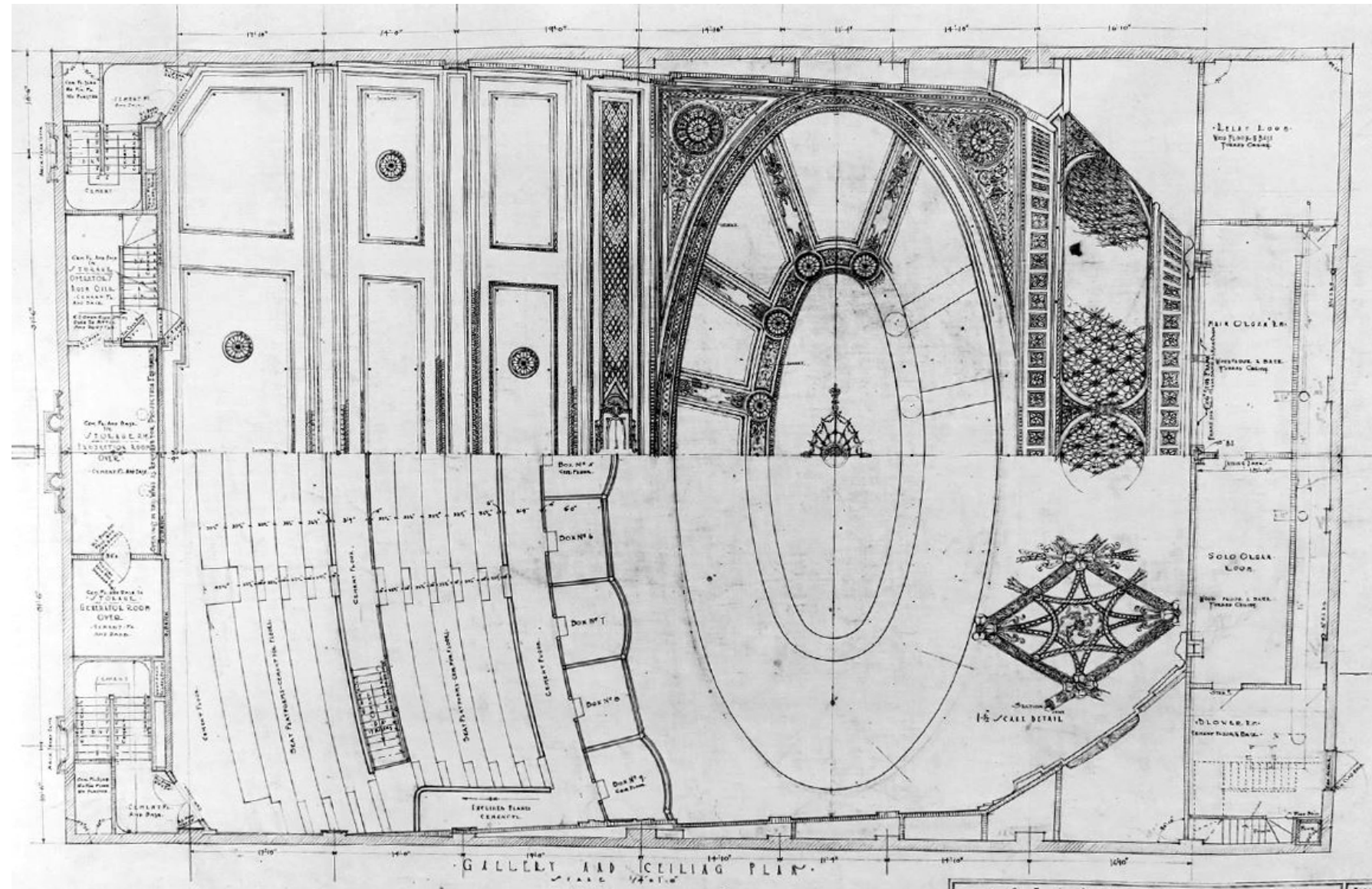


Fig. 59 Byrd Theatre Original Hand-Drawn Ceiling Plan

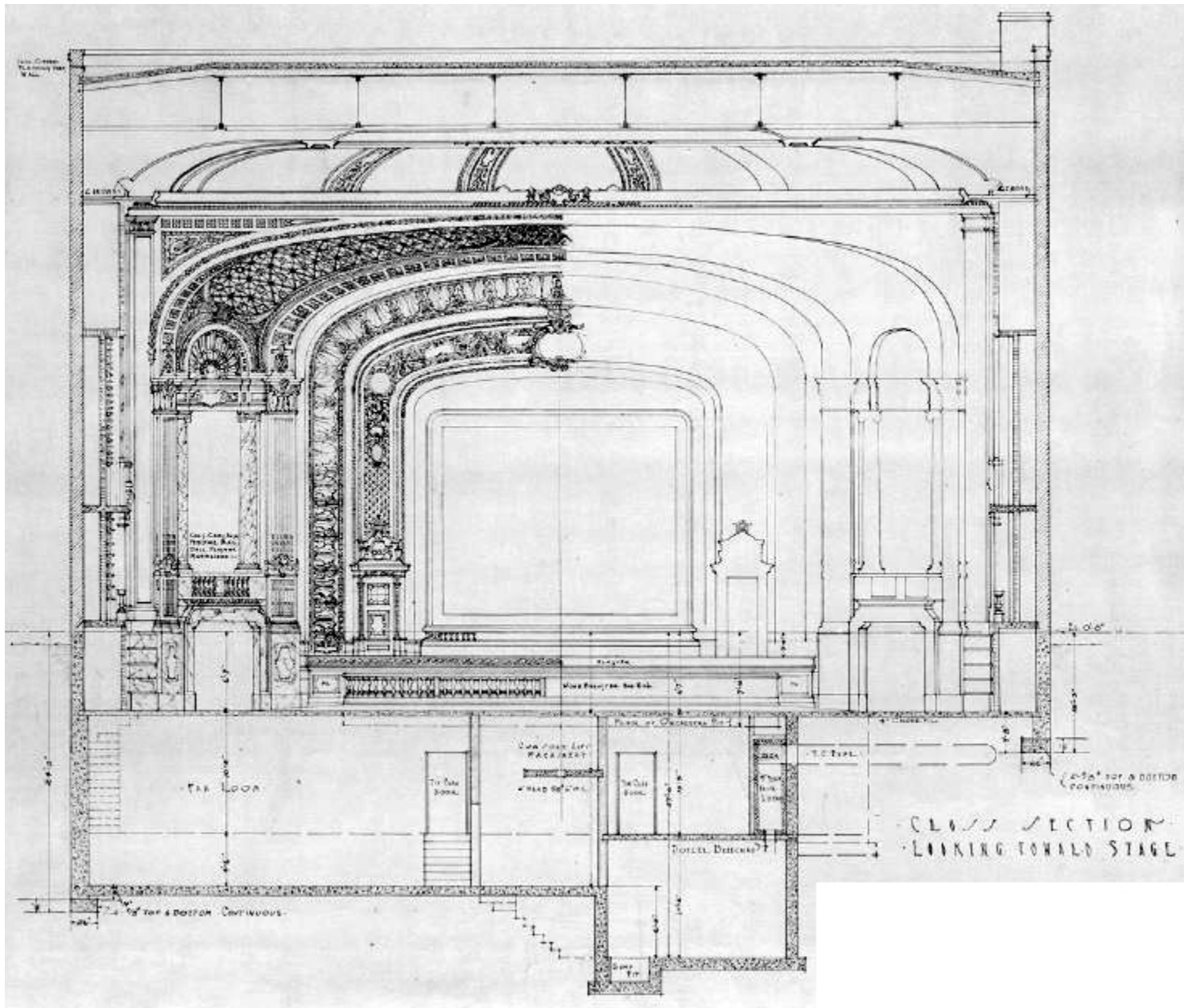


Fig. 60 Byrd Theatre Original Hand-Drawn Cross Section

PHOTOGRAPHIC STUDIES

Fig. 62 Byrd Theatre Front Facade 2019





Fig. 63 Stage



Fig. 64 Orchestra



Fig. 65 Lobby & Concessions



Fig. 66 Lobby



Fig. 67 Entry



Fig. 68 Upper Lobby



Fig. 70 The Byrd's Only Windows



Fig. 69 Balcony



Fig. 71 Projection Booth & Lighting Controls



Fig. 72 Front Facade & Marquee



Fig. 73 Byrd Theatre in Carytown Neighborhood Context



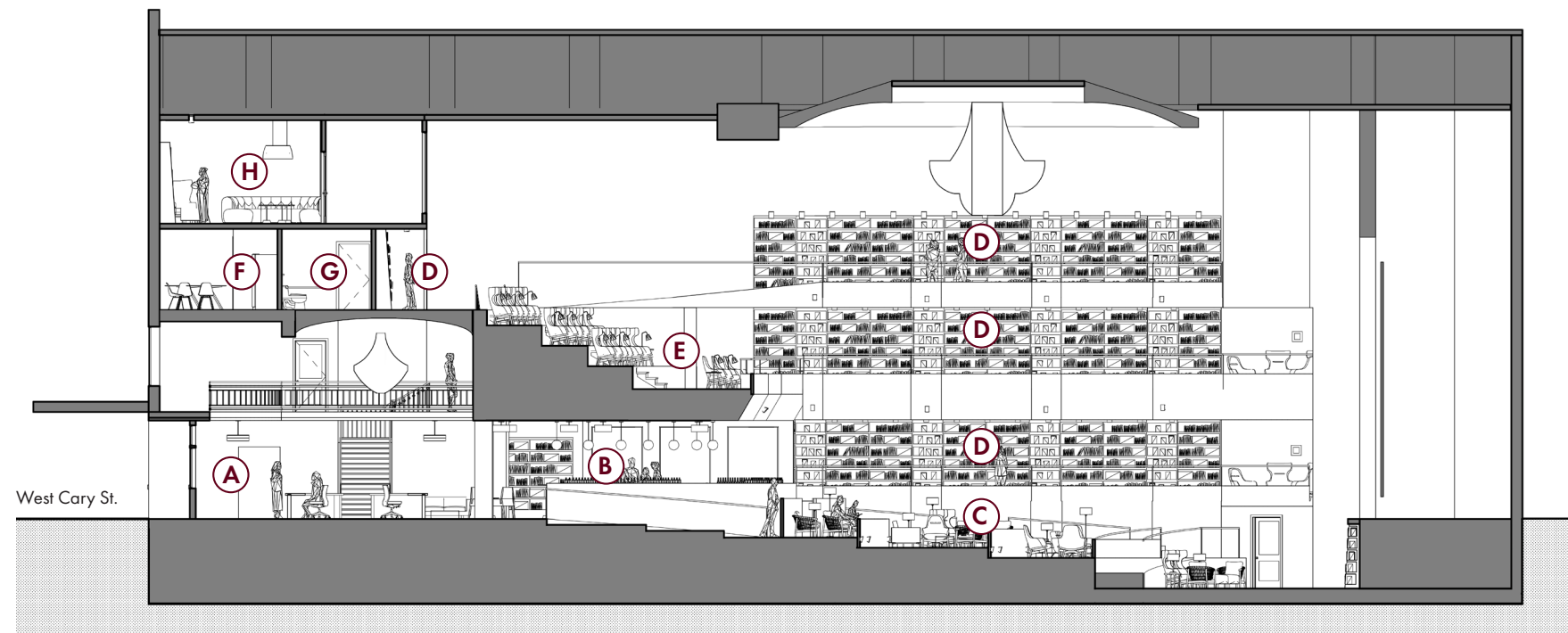
Fig. 74 Front Doors & Ticket Booth



Fig. 75 Rear Facade & Alley

PROGRAMMING

Type of Construction	Type III
Building Gross Area	16,000 SF
Target Net	9,600 SF
New Square Feet	3,500 SF
Total Occupants	238
Occupants/Gender	119
Primary Occupancy	A-3



Library by Day, Theater by Night Long Section

- A Lobby
- B Cocktail Bar
- C Auditorium
- D Book Storage and Displays
- E Balcony Seating
- F Staff Break Room
- G Restrooms
- H Reading Room

AUDITORIUM

Description: The auditorium is meant to feel like a community living room. It occupies the bulk of the first floor and is surrounded by book storage up the walls. This area has comfortable seating and occasional tables for reading and socializing during the day. It is a windowless space that removes any distractions from the outside world. At night this space and furniture is used to screen movies or host live music or speaker series. This is a more noisy and active space during the day than the Balcony.

Users: Free and open to the public during the day; Paid and open to the public at night for movie showings. The targeted demographic is adults without children but open to anyone and everyone.

Occupancy: Assembly Group A-3
 Quantity Needed: 1
 Occupant Load: 120
 Total Occupants: 120
 # of Exits Required: 3
 Area (SF): 3,400
 Total Area: 3,400
 Accessible?: Yes
 Acoustic Privacy: Low
 Visual Privacy: Low
 Security Needed?: No
 Plumbing: No
 Daylight: No

Important Adjacencies: Entry, Bar, Restrooms

FF&E: Soft seating, occasional tables

Special Considerations: Existing floor is slanted

BOOK STORAGE & DISPLAYS

Description: This is a popular materials library. A popular materials library features only current, high-demand, high-interest materials. This space is important both from a service standpoint (providing books and knowledge resources to the public) but also from an aesthetic standpoint as a dramatic visual experience. Visitors to the library can browse the stacks at their leisure or request a book to be retrieved by a staff member. This space is accessible during the day as a library and inaccessible at night. At night it serves as the backdrop to movie viewing or live music. The target users of the space are local millennials (current 22-37 year olds) in an effort to get this generation to utilize civic spaces more often.

Users: Members of the Richmond community looking to check out or read a book

Occupancy: Group B
 Quantity Needed: 8
 Occupant Load: 5
 Total Occupants: 40
 # of Exits Required: 1
 Area (SF): 150-450
 Total Area: 3,100
 Accessible?: Yes
 Acoustic Privacy: Low
 Visual Privacy: None
 Security Needed?: Yes
 Plumbing: No
 Daylight: No

Important Adjacencies: Living Room

FF&E: Custom book shelves

BALCONY

Description: This area has high-backed comfortable chairs with side tables and task lamps for reading during the day and movie-viewing at night. This space is quieter than the Auditorium and especially designed for users who are alone and not looking to communicate with others while still being among others.

Users: Members of the Richmond community looking for a quiet public space to read a book or watch a movie particularly if they are alone.

Occupancy: Group B
 Quantity Needed: 4 Tiers
 Total Occupants: 65
 # of Exits Required: 2
 Area (SF): 1,550
 Total Area: 1,550
 Accessible?: Partially
 Acoustic Privacy: Medium
 Visual Privacy: Medium
 Security Needed?: No
 Plumbing: No
 Daylight: No

Important Adjacencies: Restroom, Books, Screen

FF&E: Soft Seating, side tables, task lamps

ENTRY & RECEPTION

Description: The entry is important because it is the first interaction a visitor has with the space. This is an inviting space with clear signage for navigating the building. Staff is stationed at a front desk available for questions, movie ticket sales, and book check out and return. The entry is not a space where people spend much time. It is for greeting and navigating into other spaces.

Users: All visitors to the space and staff

Occupancy: Group B
Quantity Needed: 1
Occupant Load: 15
Total Occupants: 15
of Exits Required: 1
Area (SF): 1,200
Total Area: 1,200
Accessible?: Yes
Acoustic Privacy: Low
Visual Privacy: Low
Security Needed?: Yes
Plumbing: Water fountain
Daylight: Yes

Important Adjacencies: Restroom, Living Room, Bar

FF&E: Reception desk, signage

Special Considerations: Book security/alarms, ticketing for movie showings, seating for staff

COCKTAIL BAR & COFFEE BAR

Description: The bar area is separated into two sides - the cocktail bar and the coffee bar. There is limited seating available in each space and visitors are welcome to bring their beverages anywhere in the building. All proceeds from the bars are invested in library programs, events and scholarships. The bars are operated by library staff and is open the same hours as the building. Adjacent to each bar is a storage tucked under the stairs.

Users: Visitors to the library or theater who would like something to sip on

Occupancy: Group B
Quantity Needed: 2
Occupant Load: 20
Total Occupants: 40
of Exits Required: 1
Area (SF): 475
Total Area: 950
Accessible?: Yes
Acoustic Privacy: Low
Visual Privacy: Low
Security Needed?: Yes
Plumbing: Sink
Daylight: No

Important Adjacencies: Entry, Restrooms, Living Room

FF&E: Bar stools, occasional tables, tables, chairs, cash registers, bar equipment, coffee equipment

Special Considerations: Food storage

READING ROOM

Description: The Projection Booth Reading Room is tucked up on the newly created 4th floor of the building. It is deliberately designed to be tucked away and a special discovery for anyone adventurous enough to find it via the fire stairs or elevator. This is a cozier, more intimate version of the Auditorium with soft seating and occasional tables and the Projection Booth for movies to be played.

Users: Any visitor who can find it

Occupancy: Group B
Quantity Needed: 1
Occupant Load: 45
Total Occupants: 45
of Exits Required: 1
Area (SF): 1,760
Total Area: 1,760
Accessible?: Yes
Acoustic Privacy: Medium
Visual Privacy: High
Security Needed?: No
Plumbing: No
Daylight: No

FF&E: Soft seating, occasional tables, movie projector

STAFF BREAK ROOM

Description: Place for staff to eat, take a break and store their things

Users: Staff only

Occupancy: Group B
Quantity Needed: 1
Occupant Load: 10
Total Occupants: 10
of Exits Required: 1
Area (SF): 500
Total Area: 500
Accessible?: Yes
Acoustic Privacy: High
Visual Privacy: High
Security Needed?: Yes
Plumbing: Sink
Daylight: No

FF&E: Tables, chairs, refrigerator, coffee maker, storage

MANAGER’S OFFICE

Description: Private office for the manager of the theater/library

Users: Manager of the space and his/her staff

Occupancy: Group B
Quantity Needed: 1
Occupant Load: 3
Total Occupants: 3
of Exits Required: 1
Area (SF): 120
Total Area: 120
Accessible?: Yes
Acoustic Privacy: High
Visual Privacy: High
Security Needed?: Yes
Plumbing: No
Daylight: No

FF&E: Desk, chairs, storage

RESTROOMS

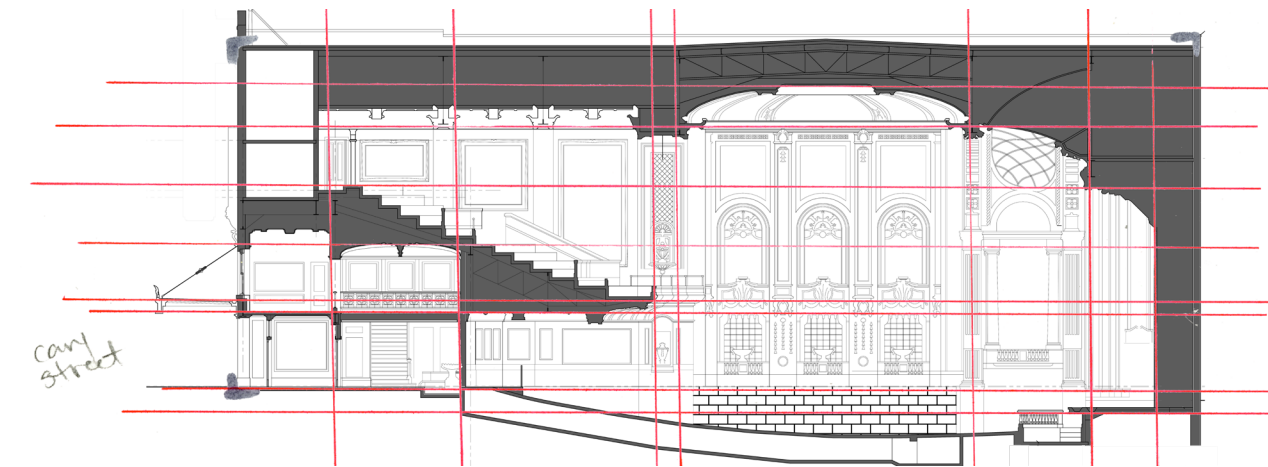
Description: Public restrooms for all located on Level 1 and Level 3. This spaces also houses housekeeping equipment.

Users: All visitors to the space

Occupancy: Group B
Quantity Needed: 3
of Exits Required: 1
Area (SF): 190
Total Area: 570
Accessible?: Yes
Acoustic Privacy: High
Visual Privacy: High
Security Needed?: Yes
Plumbing: Sinks, Toilets
Daylight: No

Important Adjacencies: Entry, Cafe, Living Room, Housekeeping

DESIGN CONCEPT



Study of existing datum lines in the long section of the Byrd Theatre

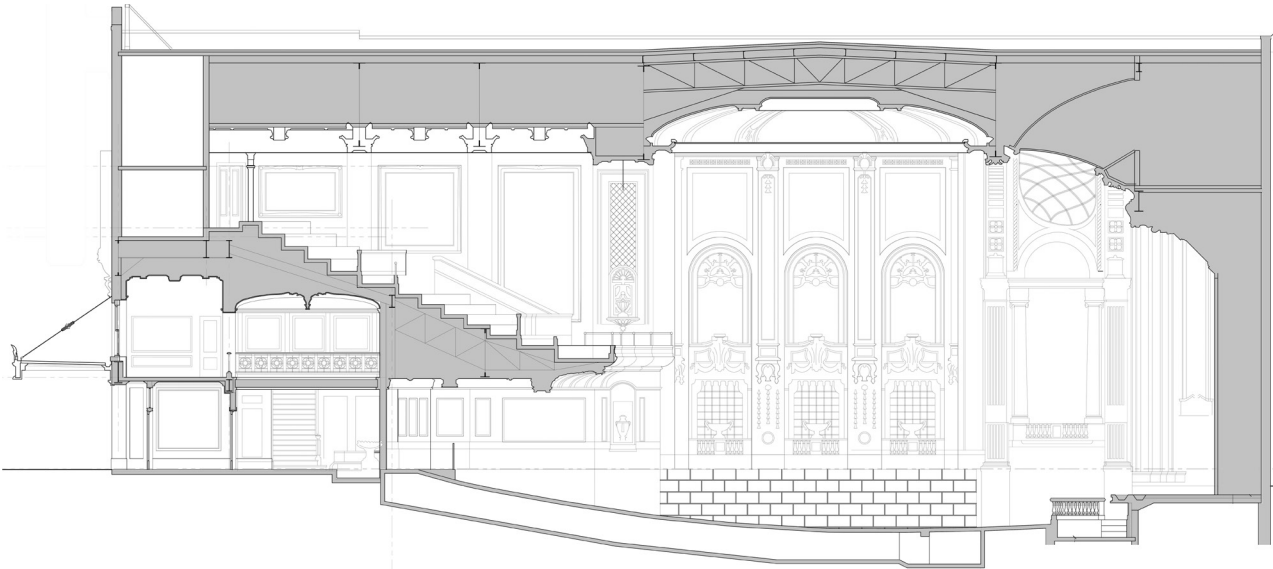
WHAT DOES THE BYRD WANT?

This project is a conversation with a historic building about introducing new elements within the existing building's rhythm and ornamentation.

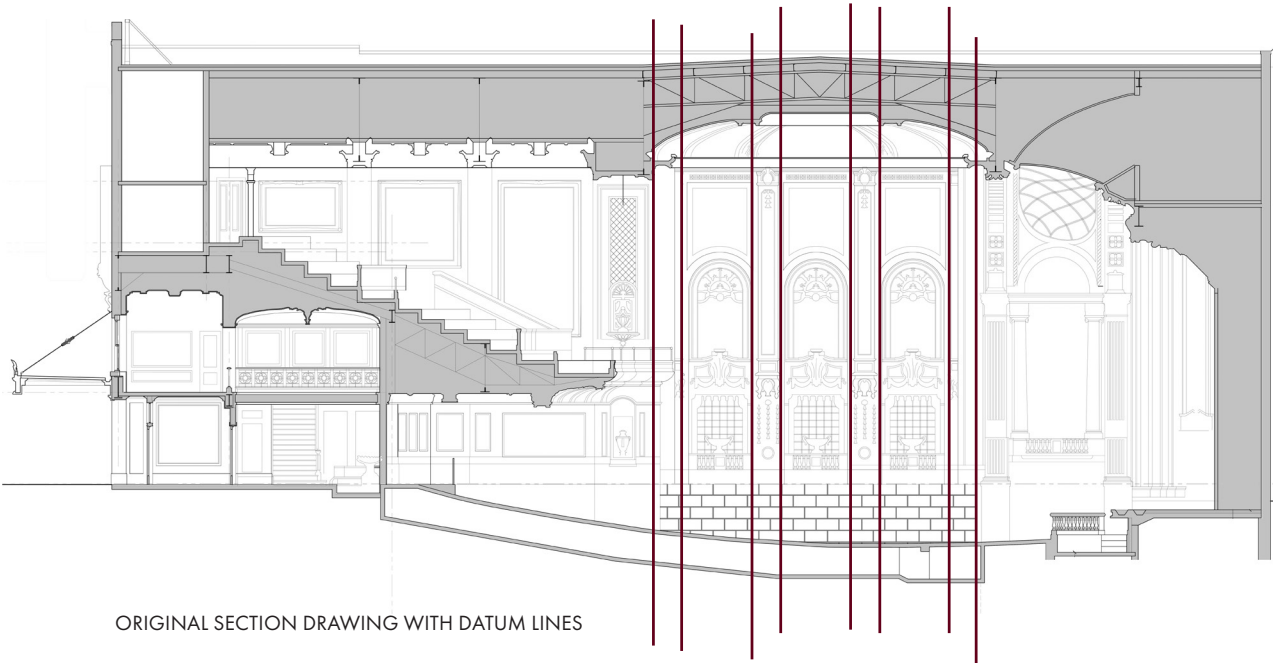
An important part of this conversation with the Byrd involved a study of its vertical and horizontal datum lines from existing built elements and ornamentation.

The new library program responds to and respects these datum lines. For example, the rhythm of the tripartite auditorium wall ornamentation and structural grid was used to sensitively integrate the library bookshelves.

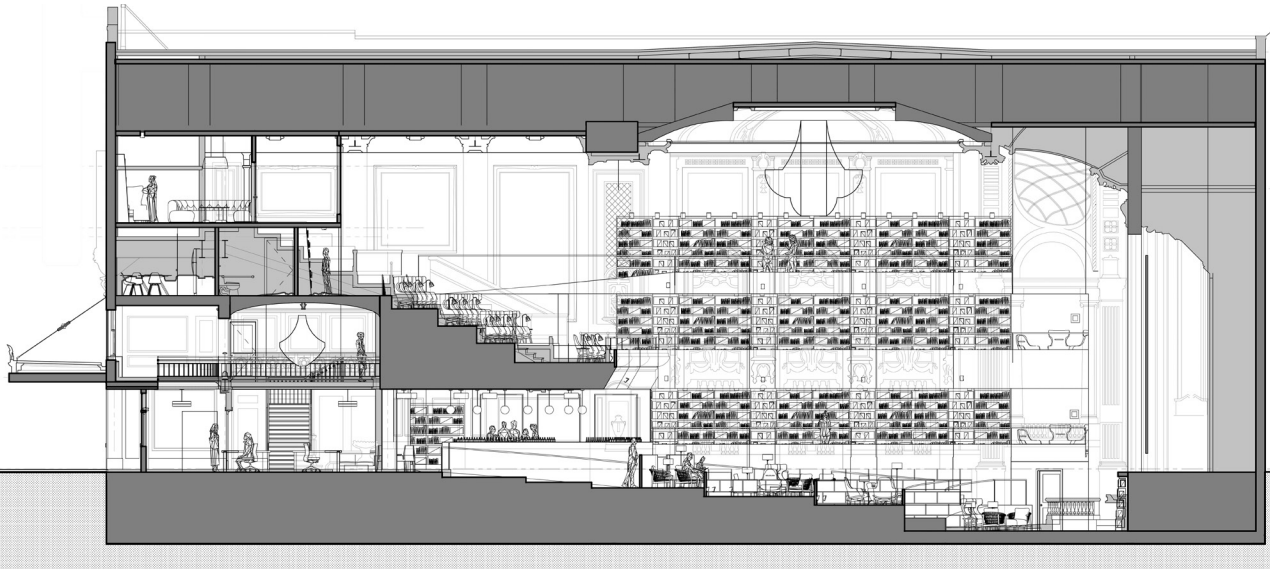
The custom bookshelves alternate between scale and display type in accord with the tripartite existing ornamentation and structural wall columns.



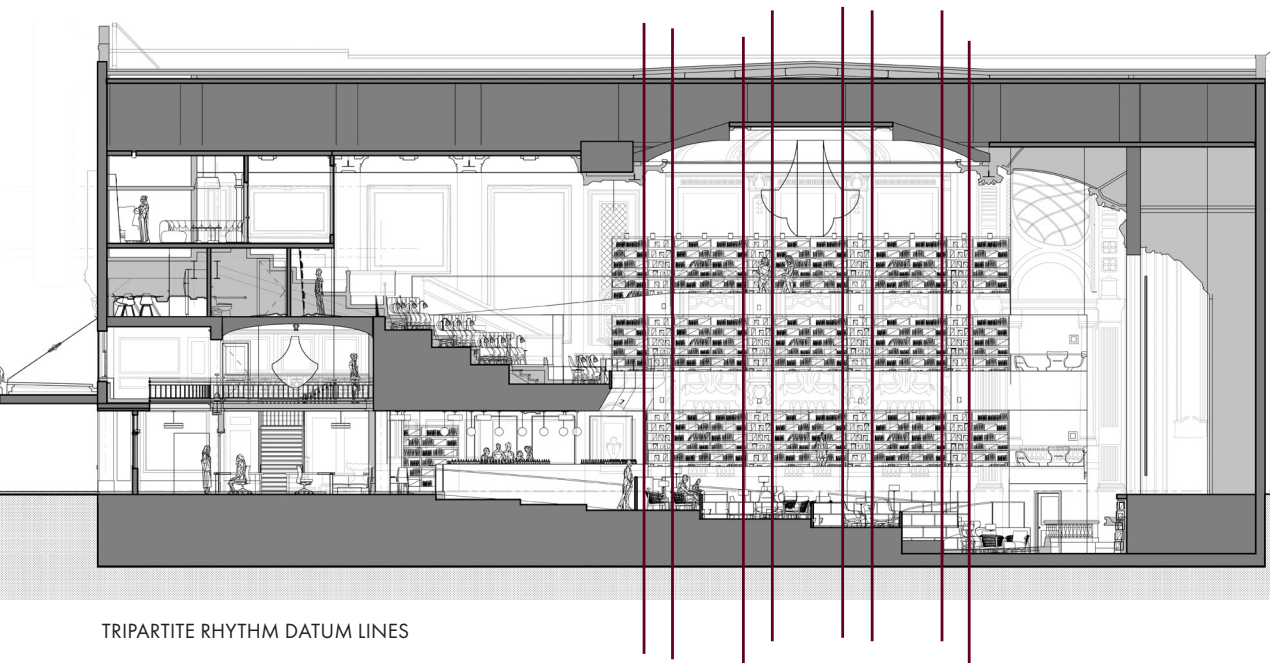
ORIGINAL LONG SECTION DRAWING



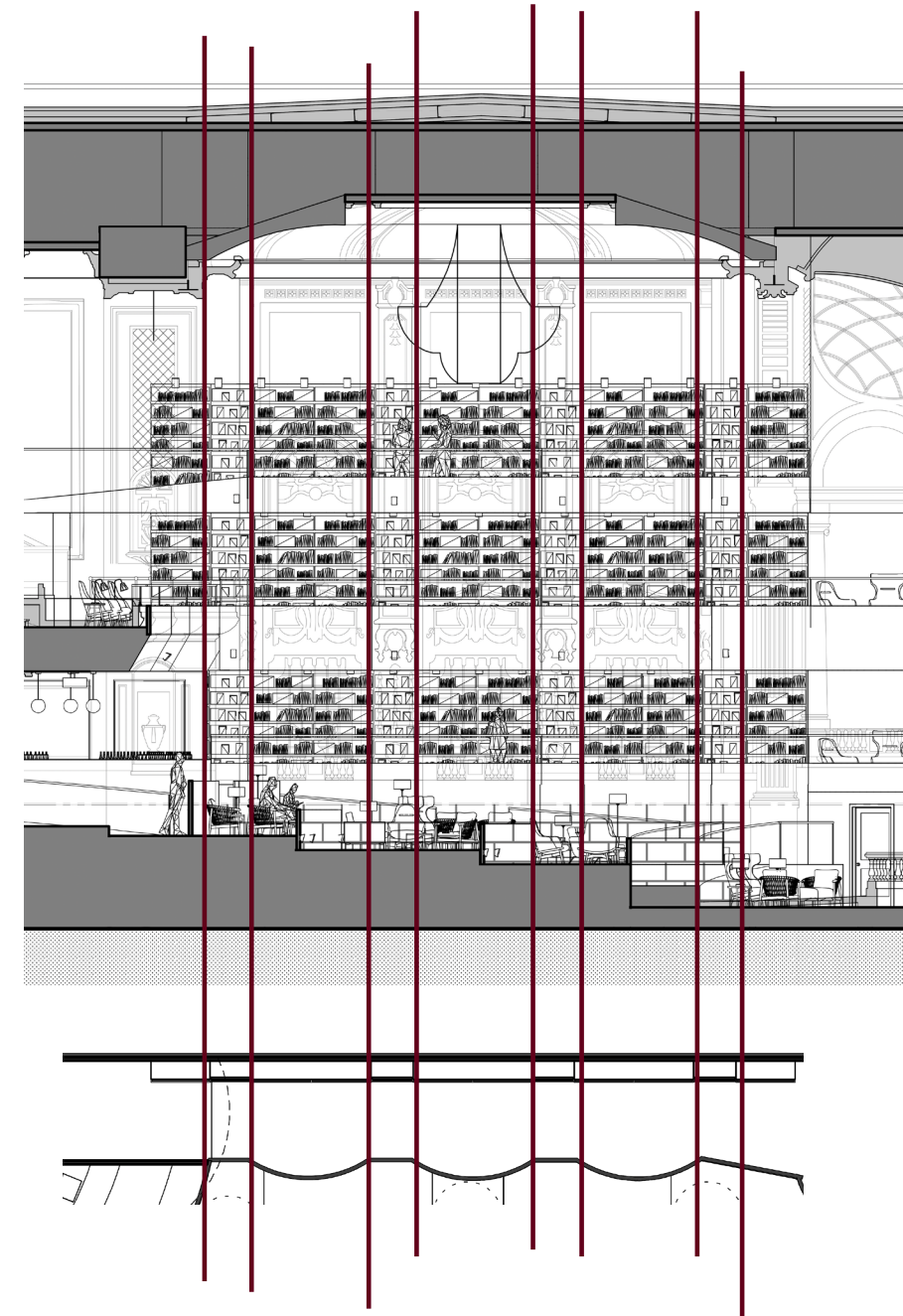
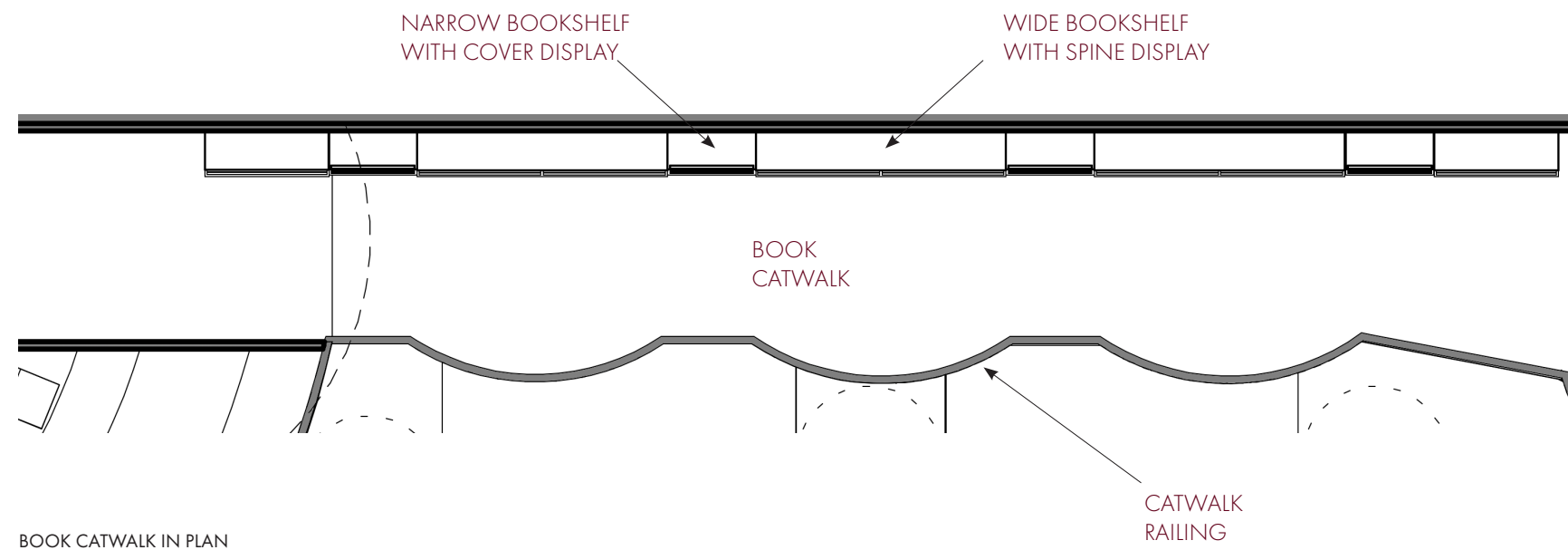
ORIGINAL SECTION DRAWING WITH DATUM LINES



ORIGINAL SECTION WITH NEW SECTION OVERLAY

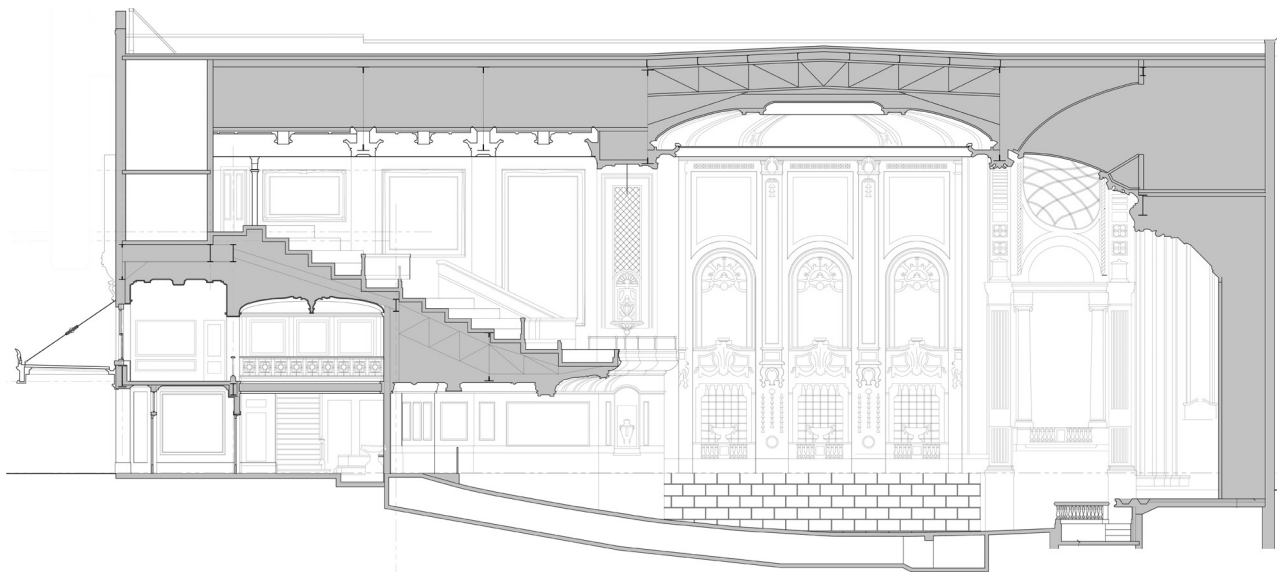


TRIPARTITE RHYTHM DATUM LINES

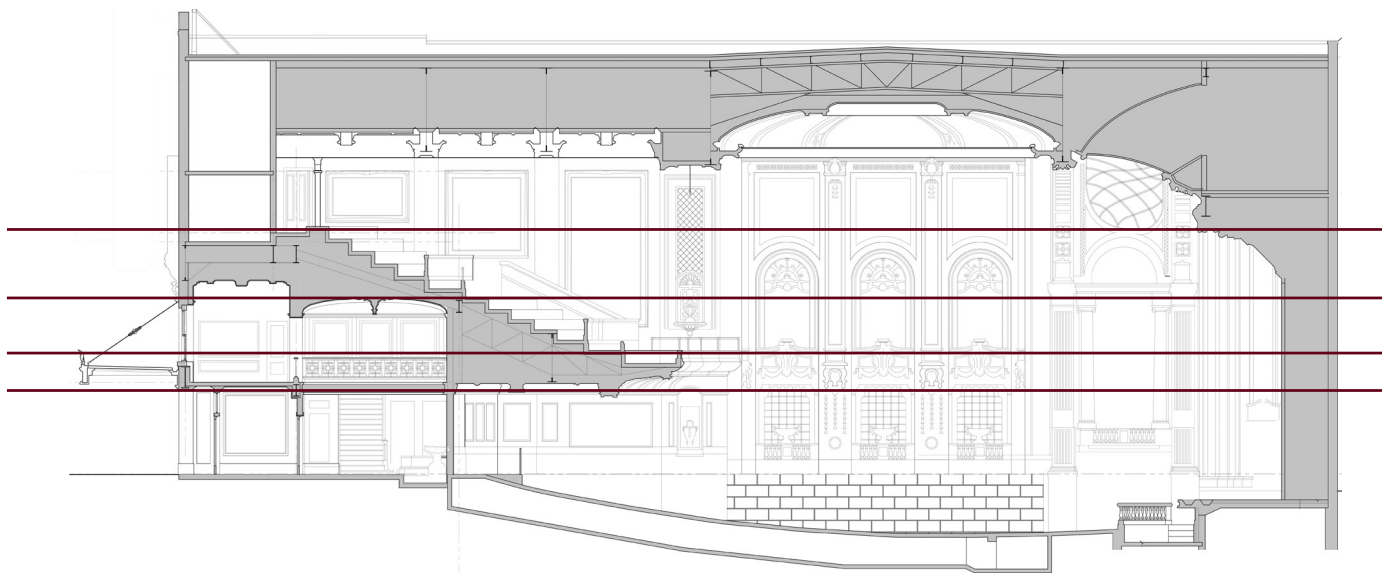


The newly introduced catwalks themselves also respond to this rhythm while mimicking the pattern of the existing balcony edge. The catwalks bow out between columns/narrower book displays and tuck in at the columns/narrower book displays.

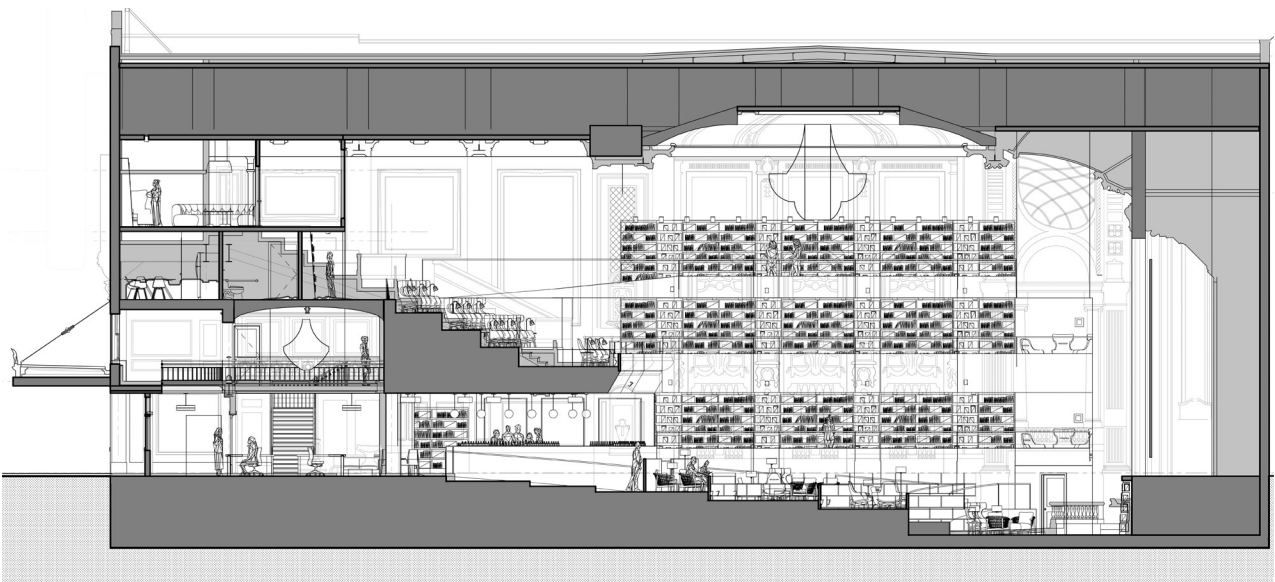
Many other decisions were informed by the datum lines of the building. For example, the balcony tiered seating changes. The tiered seating ends where the barrel vault ends and at the height of the previous middle tier landing.



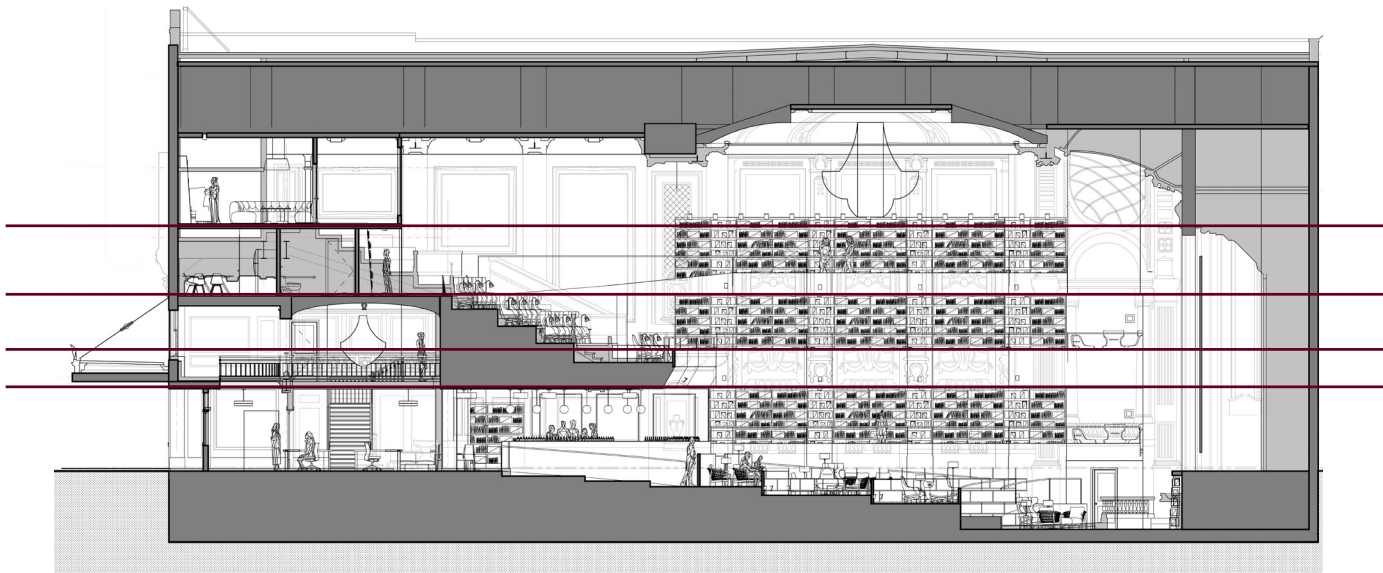
ORIGINAL LONG SECTION DRAWING



ORIGINAL SECTION DRAWING WITH DATUM LINES



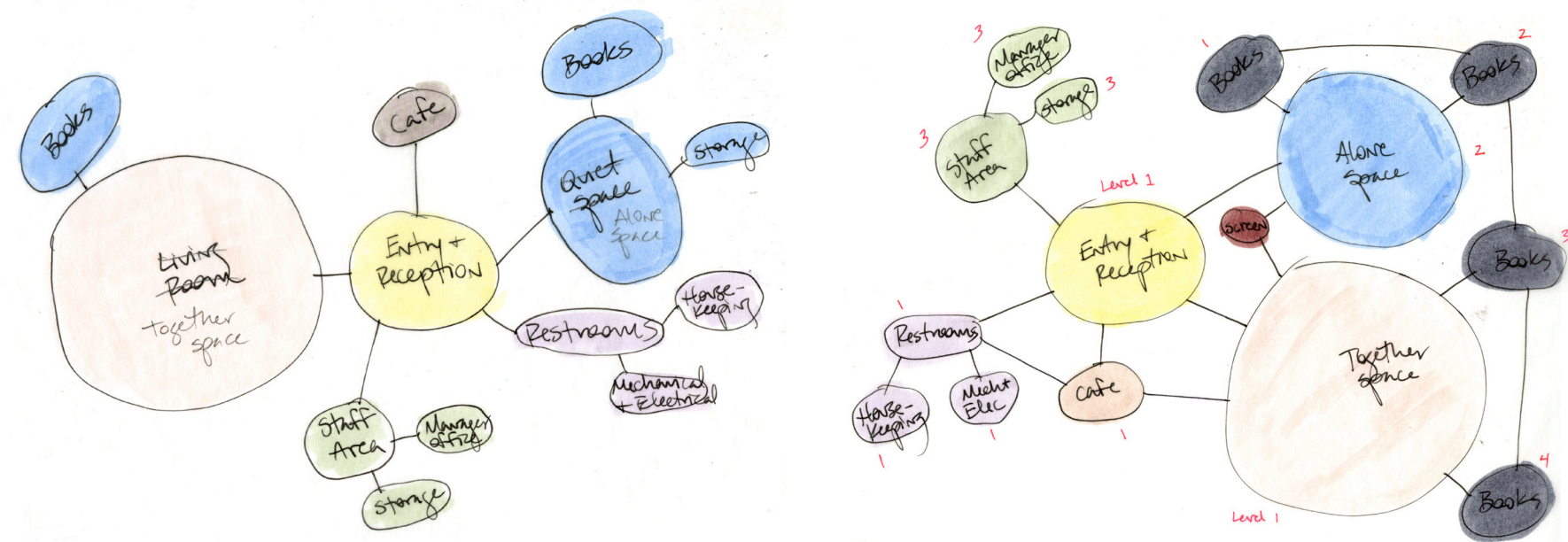
ORIGINAL SECTION WITH NEW SECTION OVERLAY



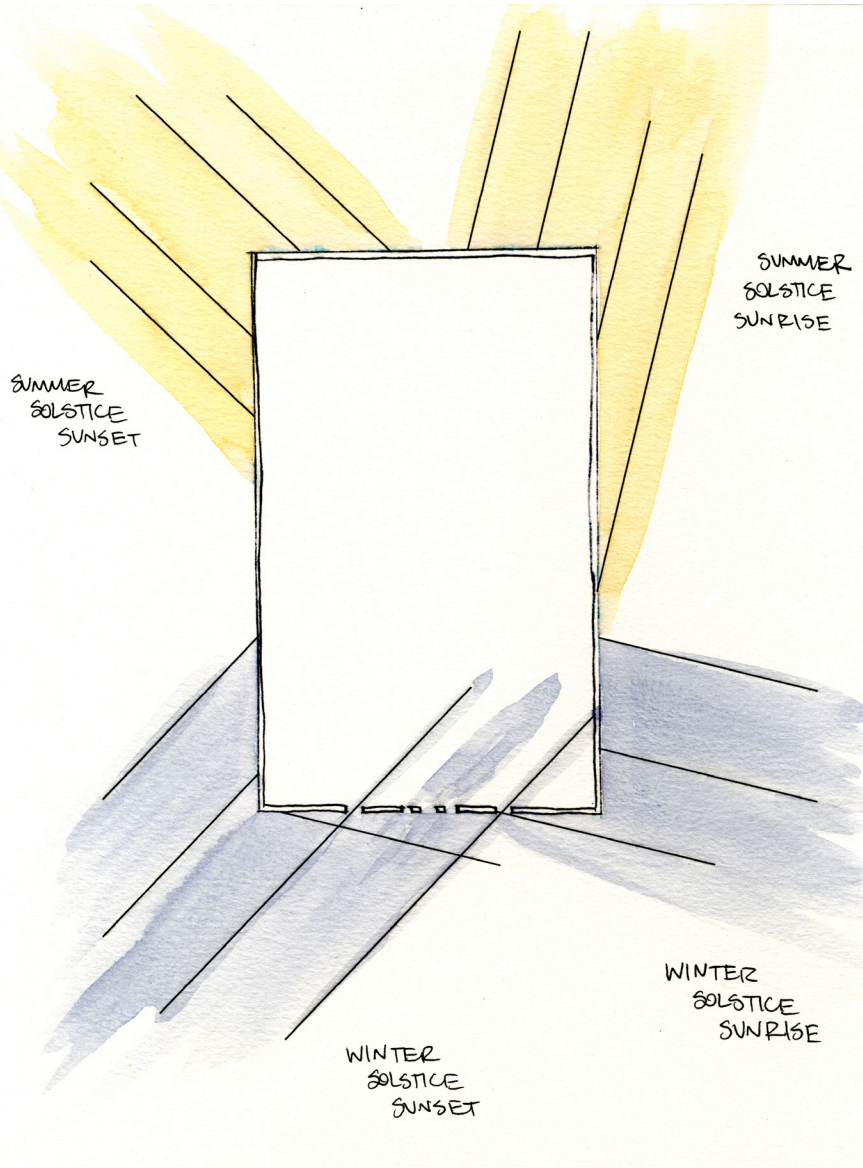
HORIZONTAL DATUM LINES

BUBBLE DIAGRAMS

Early space planning, adjacency and programming diagrams indicate that all other programmatic elements stem from the Entry & Reception portion of the building. Space names and programmatic needs are still being defined at this stage.



SUNLIGHT STUDIES



The Byrd is a predominantly windowless space. These watercolors indicate how sunlight passes through the windows and touches the building at key points throughout the year. The section drawings are explorations of how sunlight would enter the space if a skylight was to be introduced.

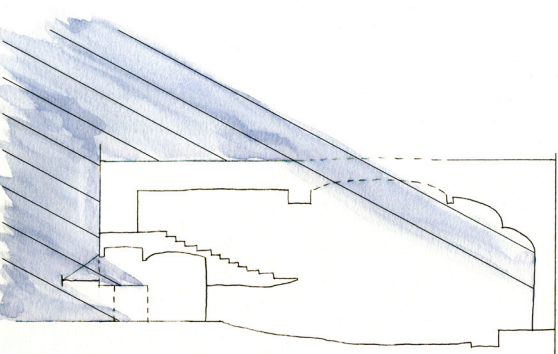


Diagram of the Byrd Theatre at noon on the Winter Solstice

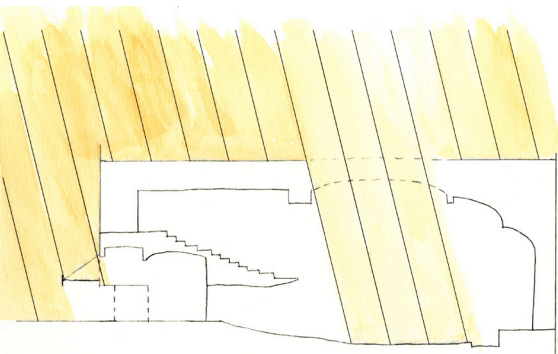
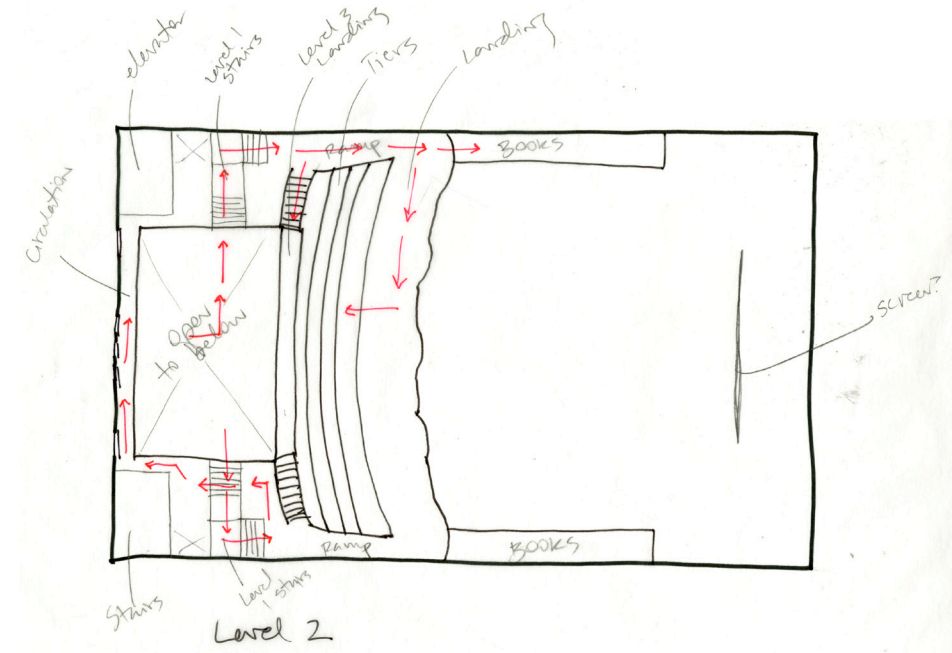
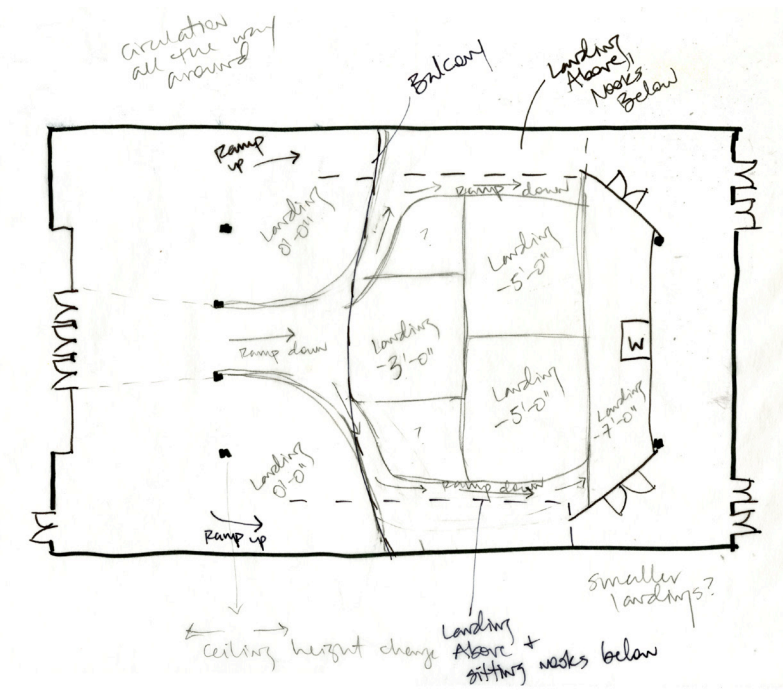
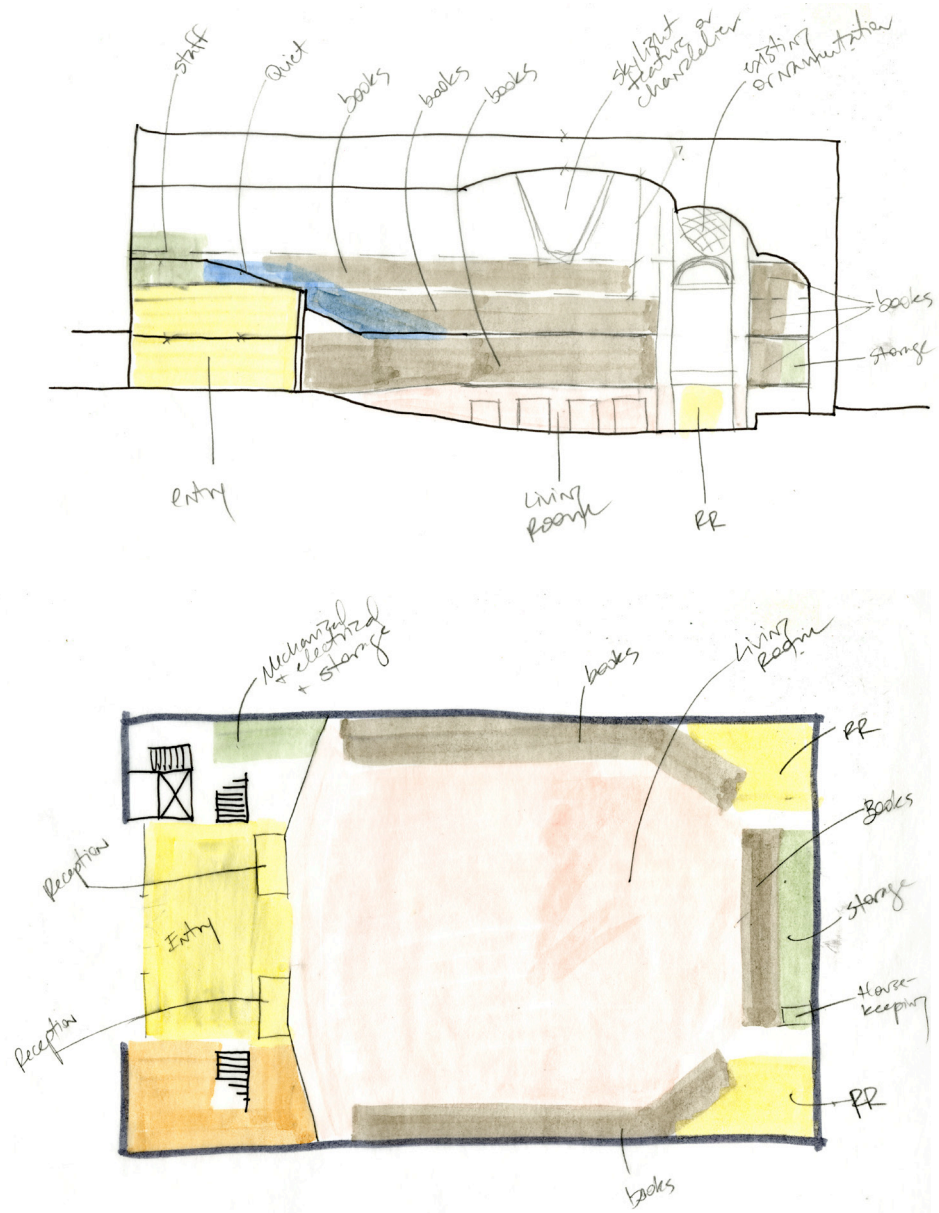


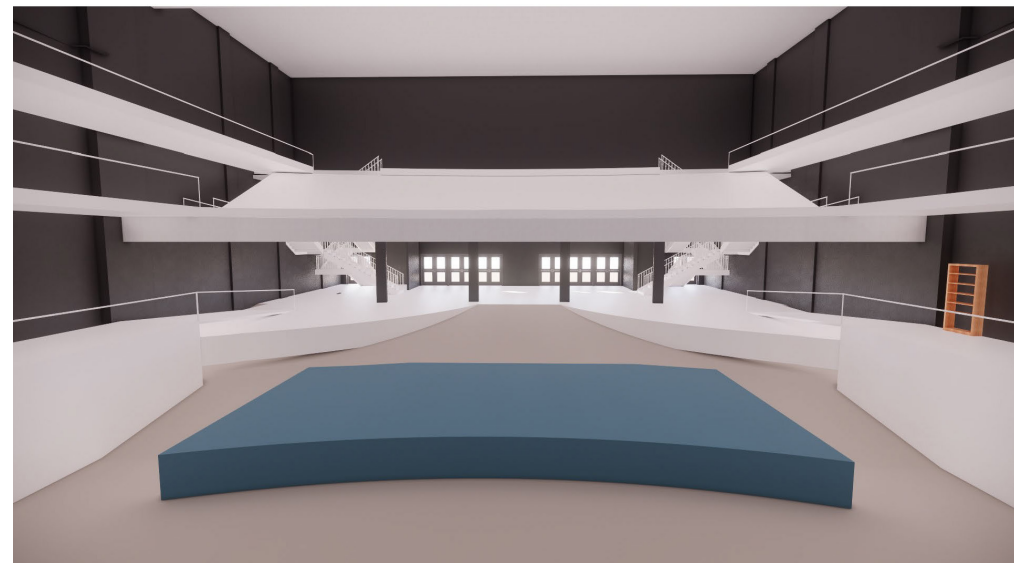
Diagram of the Byrd Theatre at noon on the Summer Solstice

PRELIMINARY PLANS & SECTIONS



INITIAL MASSING STUDIES

Revit explorations of how to address the sloped floor of the Auditorium while considering program and code. Early iterations of the book catwalks and opening up the lobby to create a sight line between the Auditorium and the entry can be seen as well.



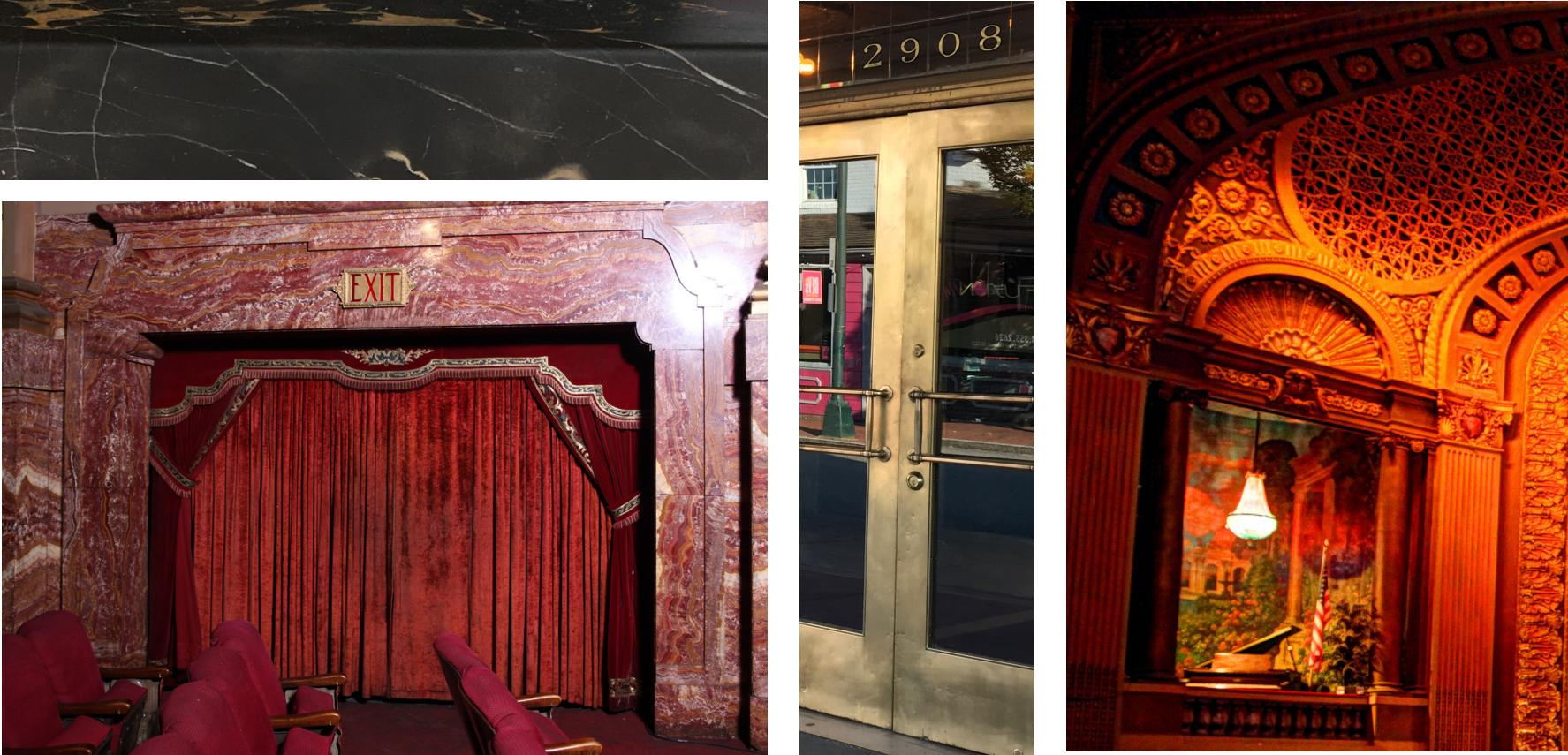
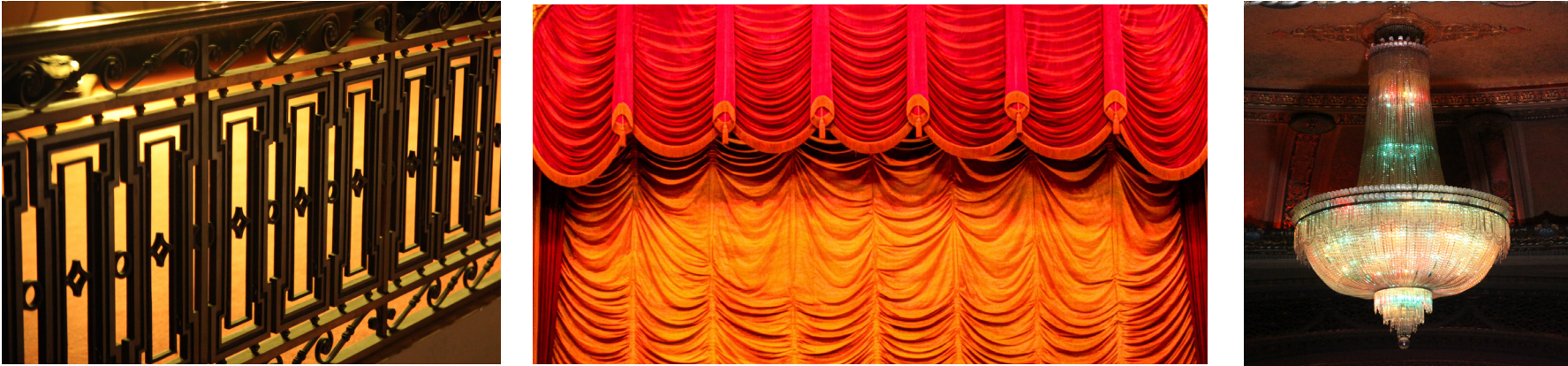
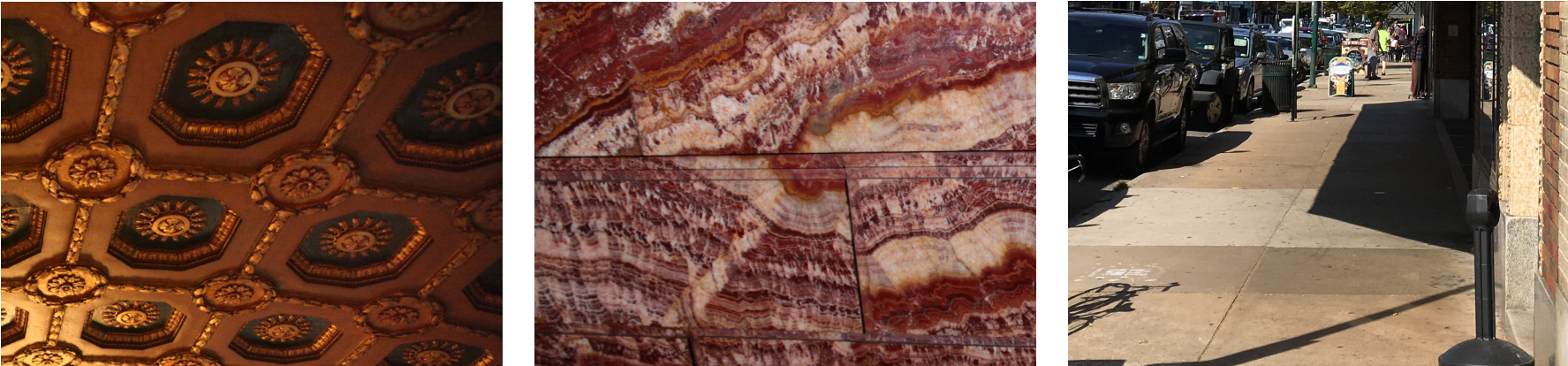
Auditorium early massing study



Lobby view into Auditorium early massing study

EXISTING MATERIALS

Understanding the Byrd Theatre’s existing materials and ornamentation was an important part of successfully integrating in new programmatic elements. Key features of the existing interior materials that were used for inspiration when introducing the library program were: gold accents, stone (especially marble), rich fabrics, pattern, the color red, sparkle (from the chandeliers) and the permission to be bold.



DESIGN REALIZATION

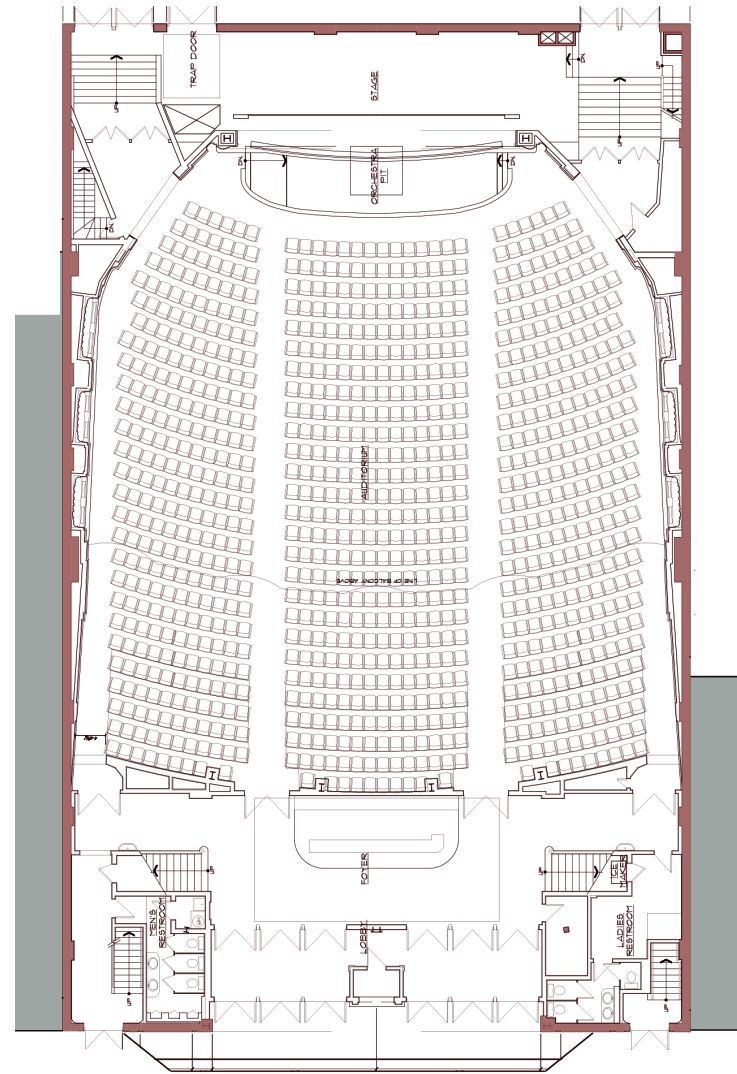


View of Stage from Auditorium

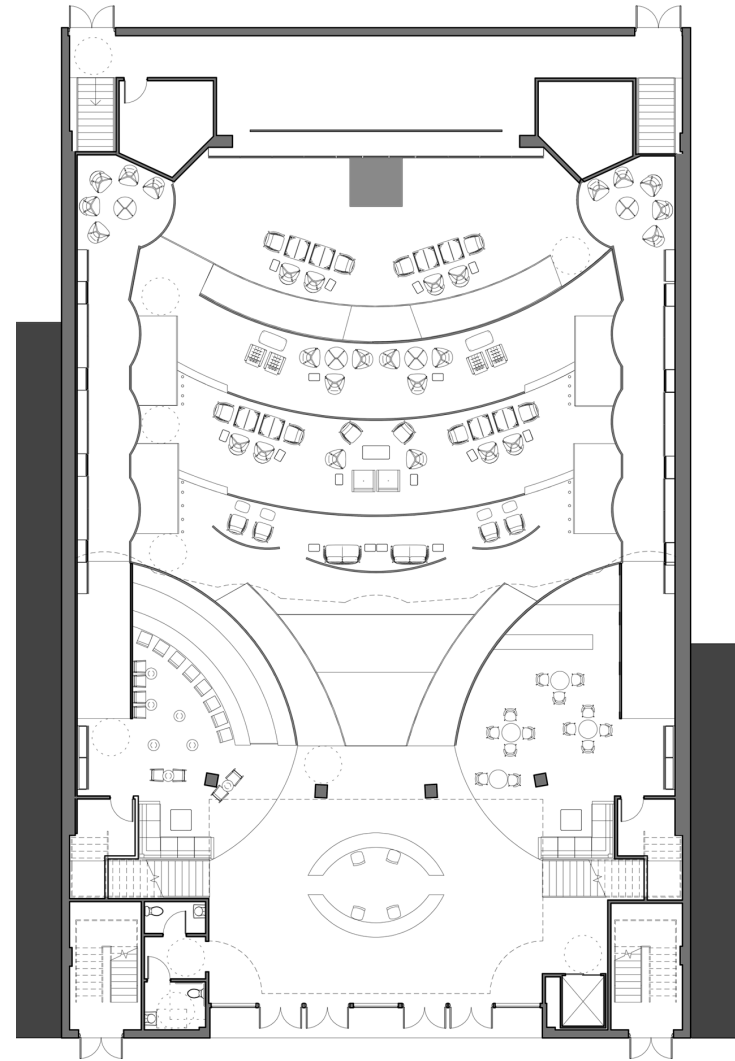
Paint is peeling off the walls of the historic Byrd Theatre, broken chairs are covered in caution tape instead of repaired and decades-old stains mark the carpet. Meanwhile, the average book at the Richmond Public Library Main Branch is 36 years old, put into circulation in the Reagan administration. Why? They are both lacking adequate funding.

Introducing a library program into the Byrd Theatre will pool resources to preserve and protect both the historic theater and the Richmond Public Library system while creating a very special public place in the Richmond community that is accessible to all. Libraries and movie theaters are places where communities come together.

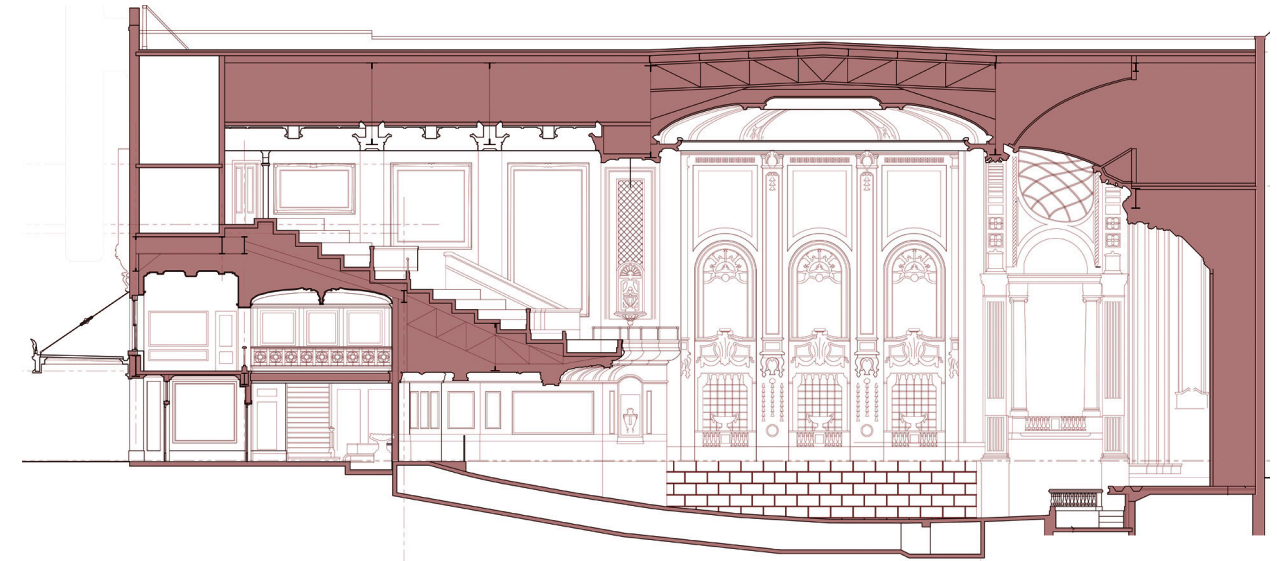
This project is a public popular materials library and a movie theater for adults. A popular materials library is a library that features current, high-demand materials like best sellers and new releases with adequate copies to meet demand. The theater can also accommodate musical performances or speaker series. As a combination popular materials library and movie theater, this project is a celebration of diversion and amusement in literature and cinema.



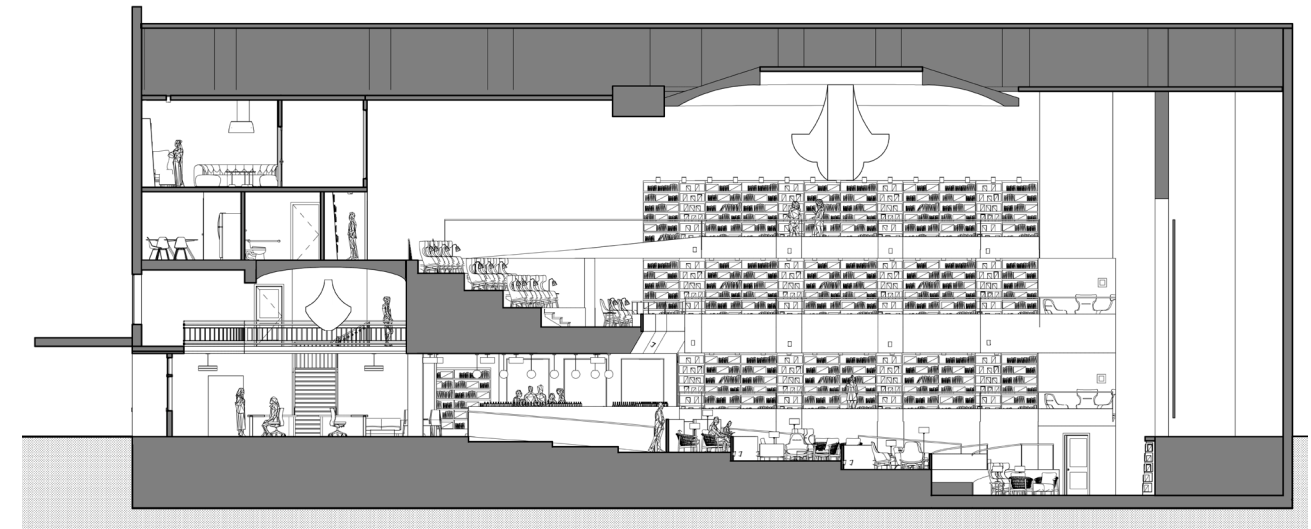
EXISTING LEVEL 1 FLOOR PLAN



NEW LEVEL 1 FLOOR PLAN



EXISTING LONG SECTION



NEW LONG SECTION

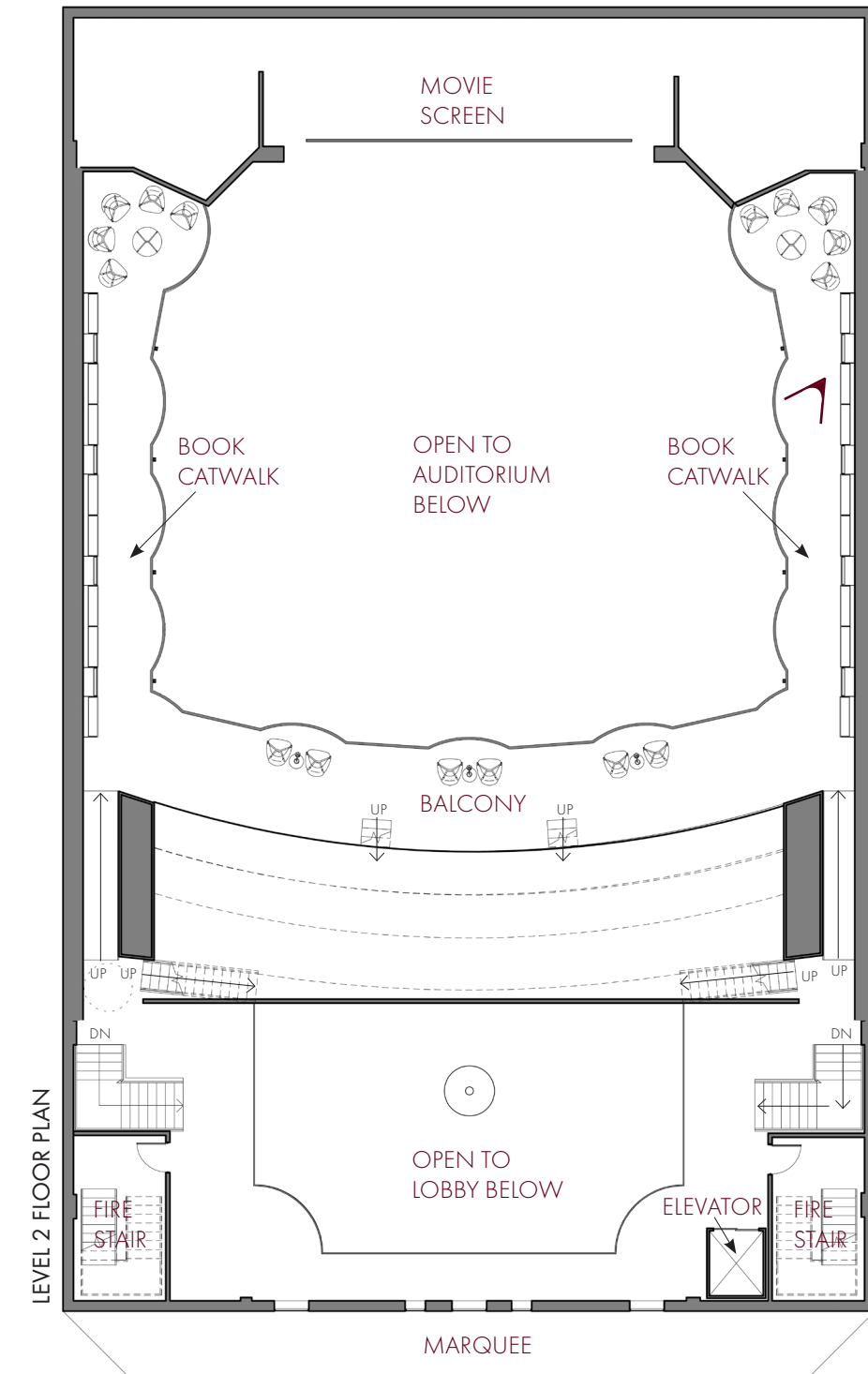
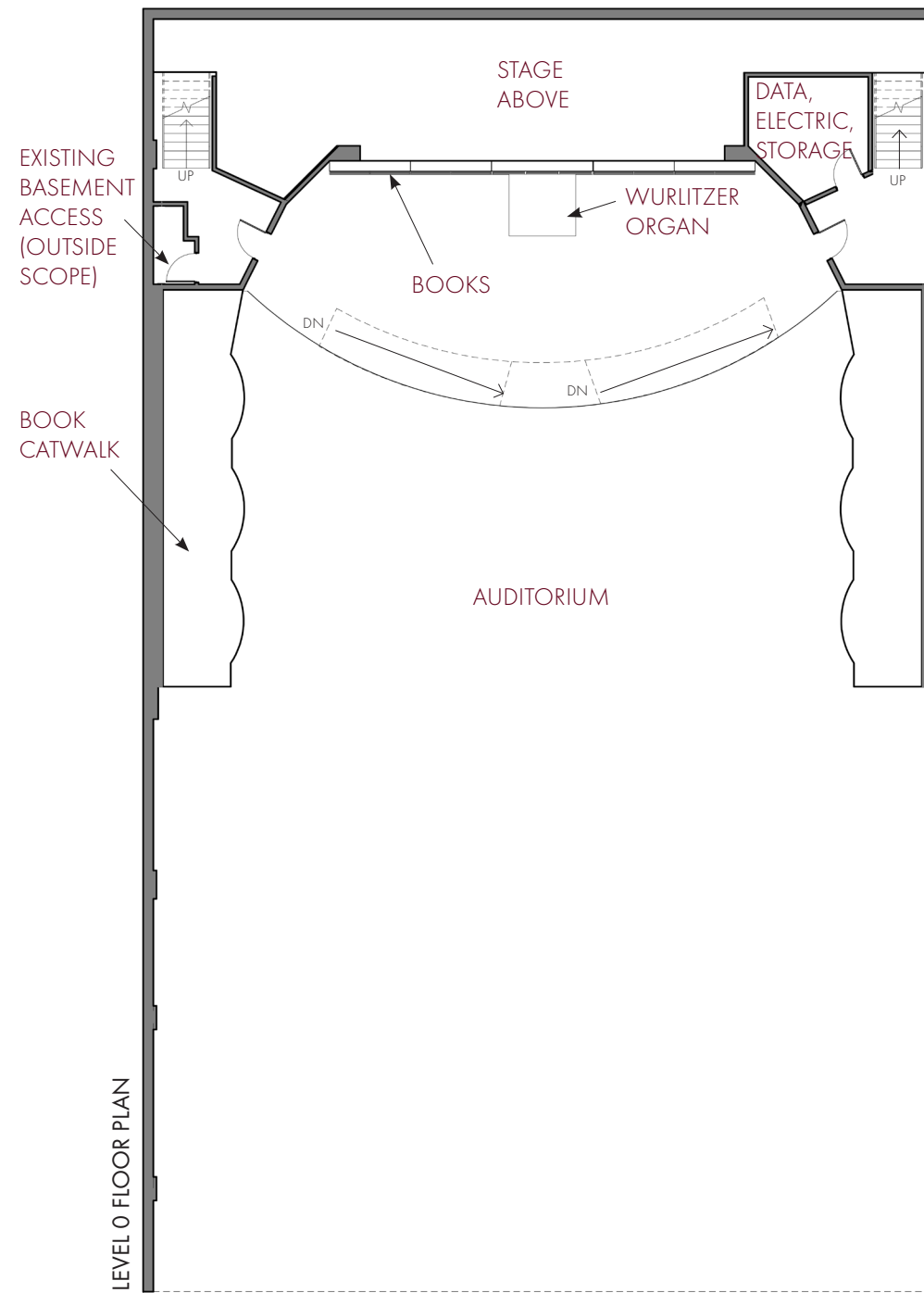
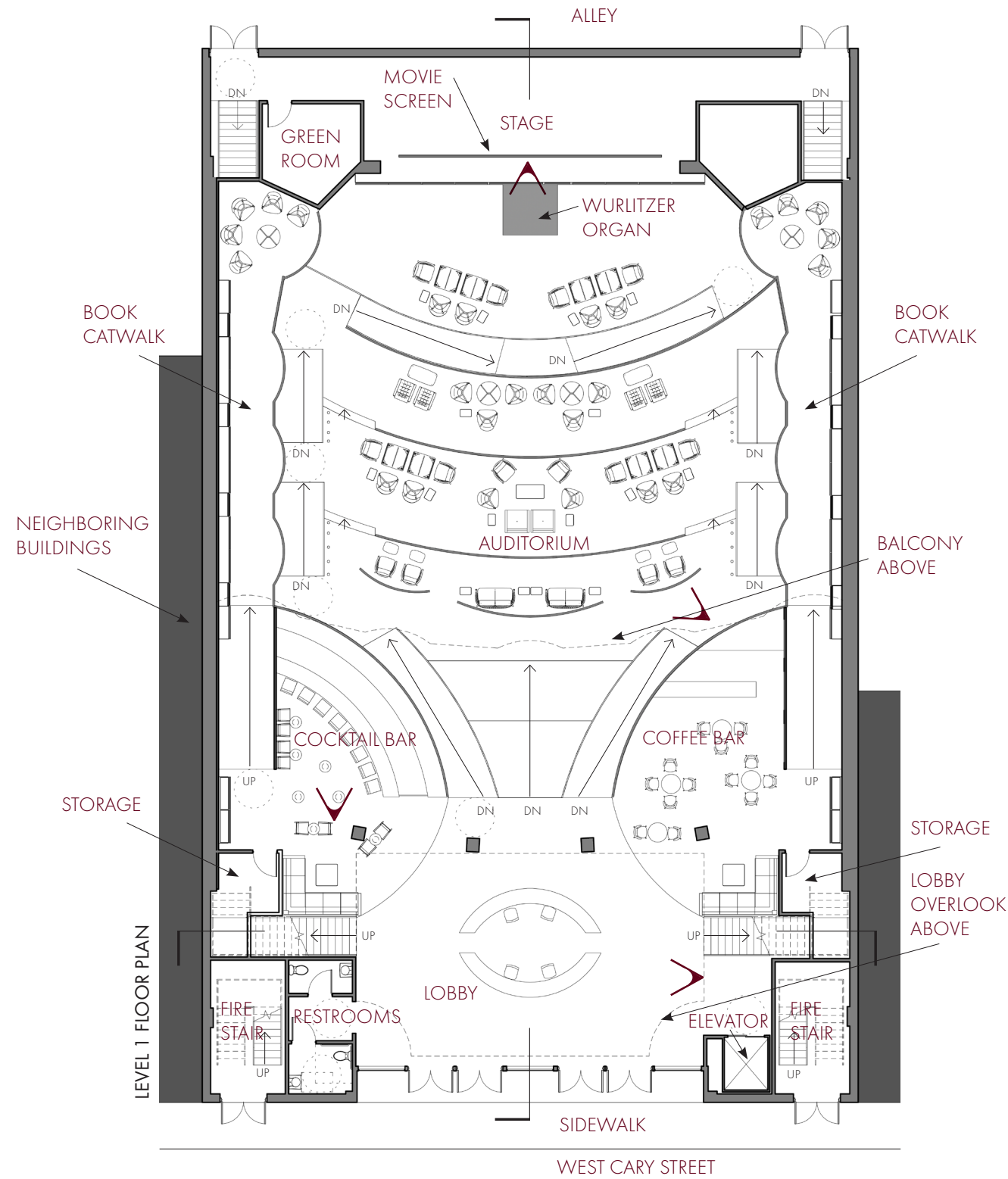


PERSPECTIVE VIEW

LEVEL 1 FLOOR PLAN

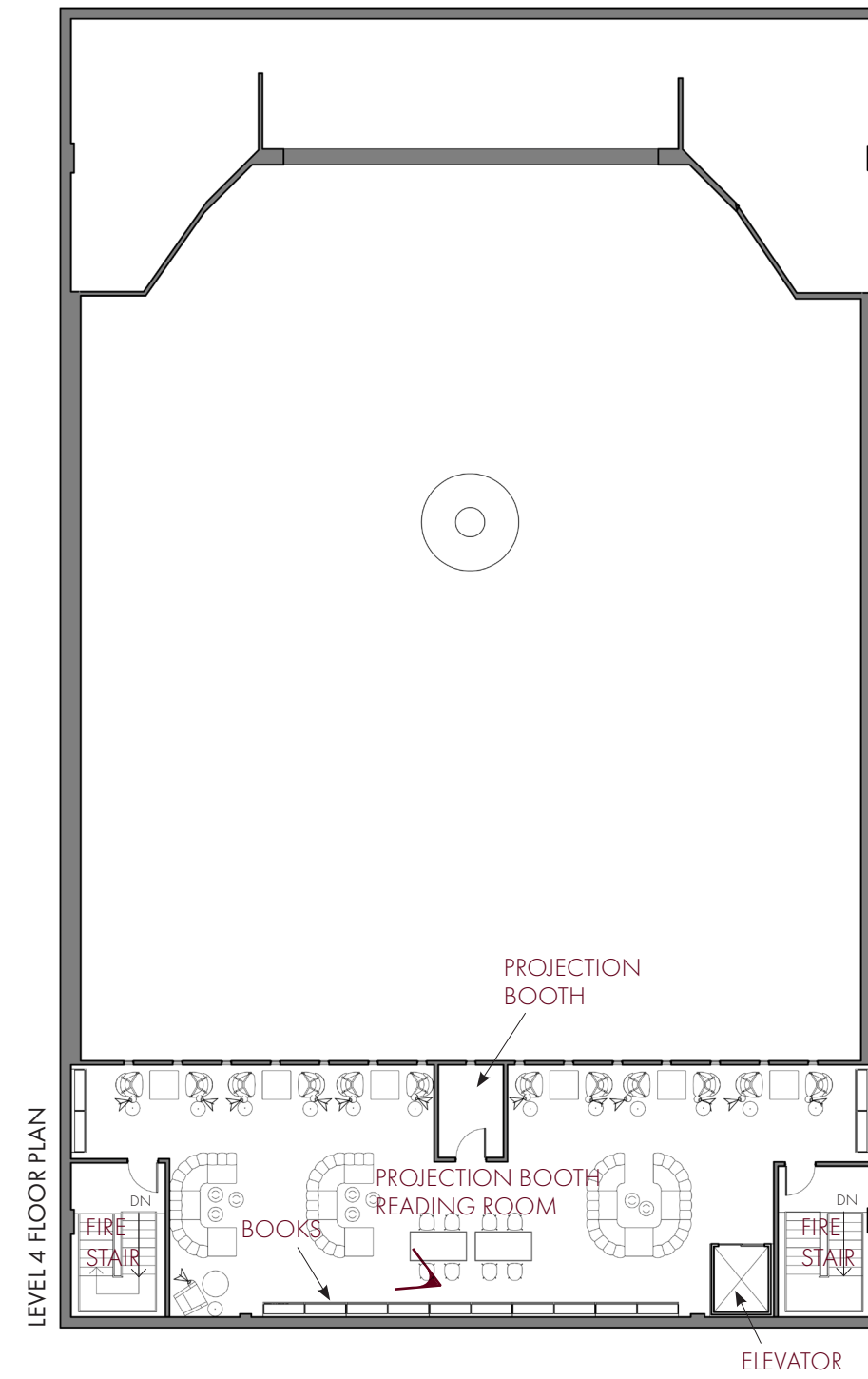
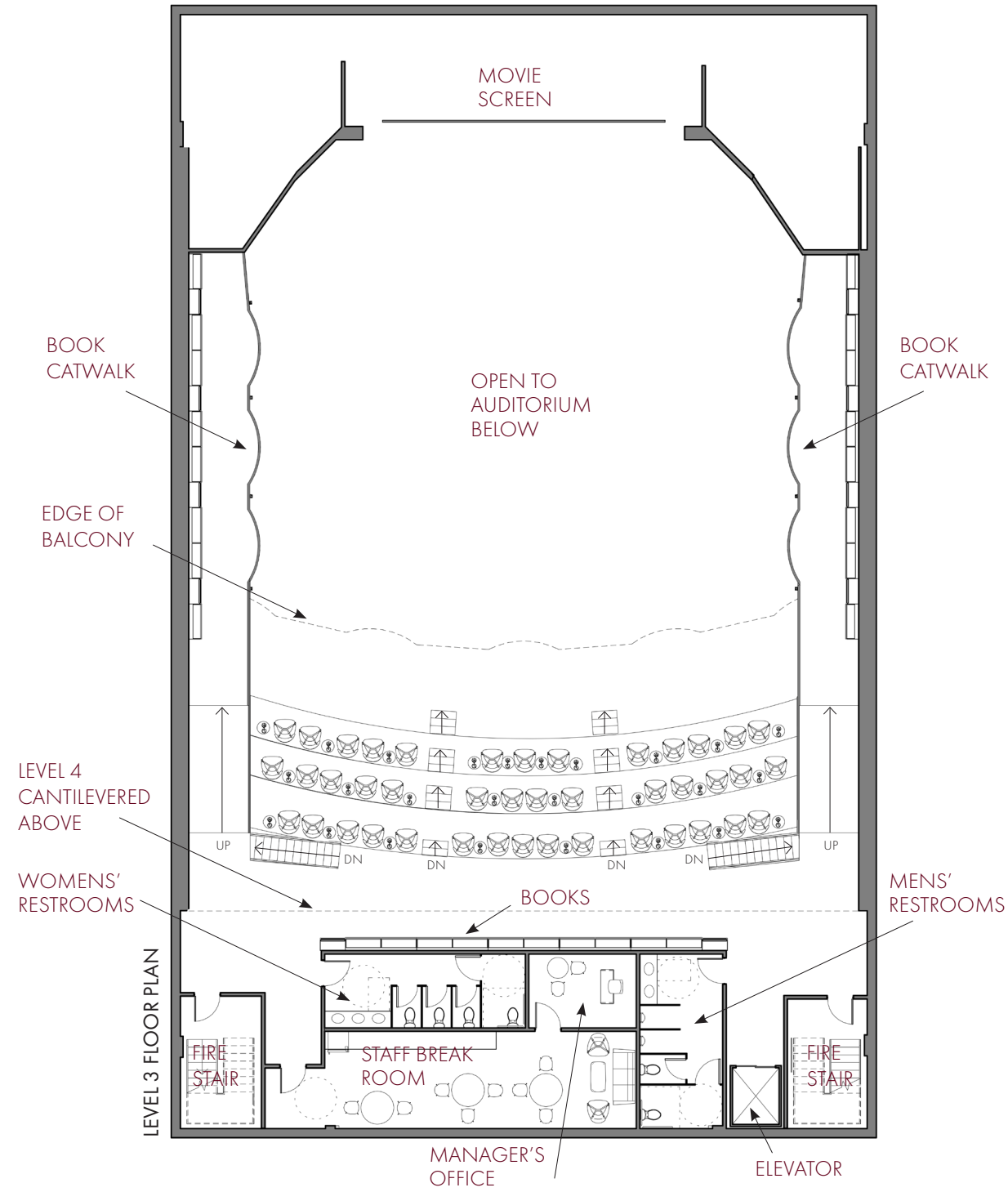
LEVEL 0 FLOOR PLAN

LEVEL 2 FLOOR PLAN



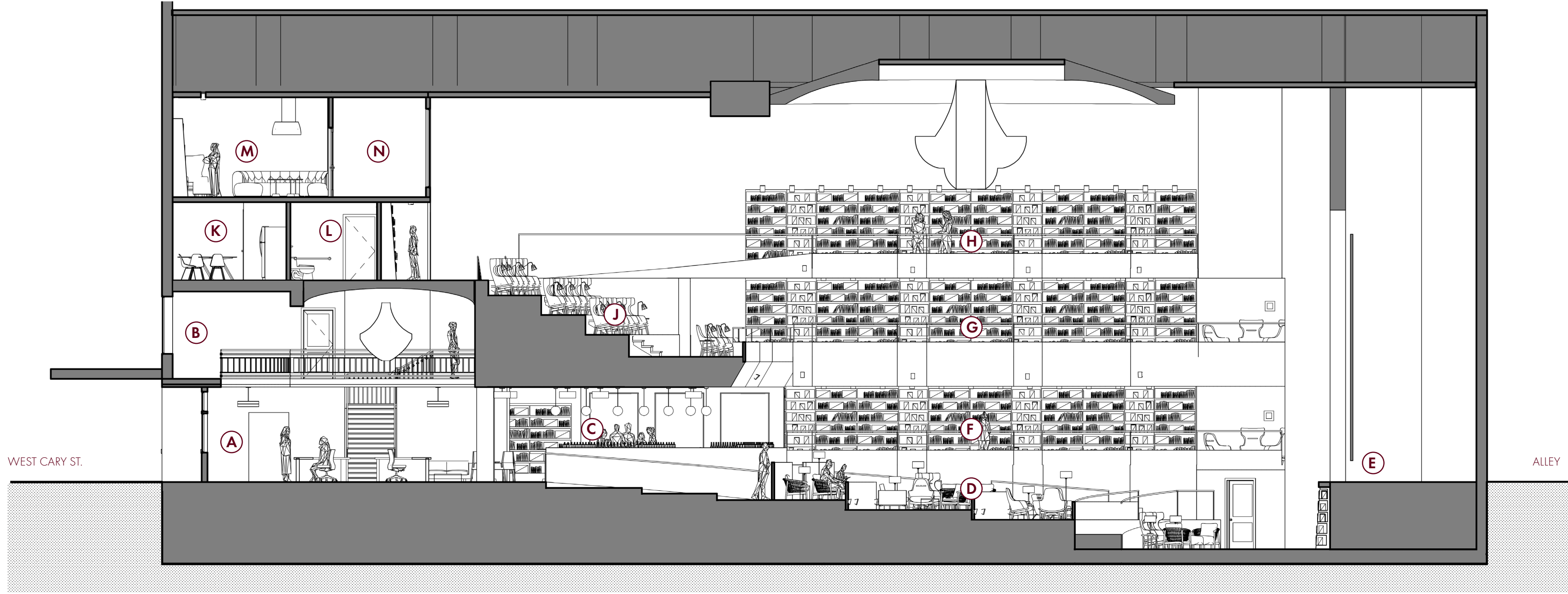
LEVEL 3 FLOOR PLAN

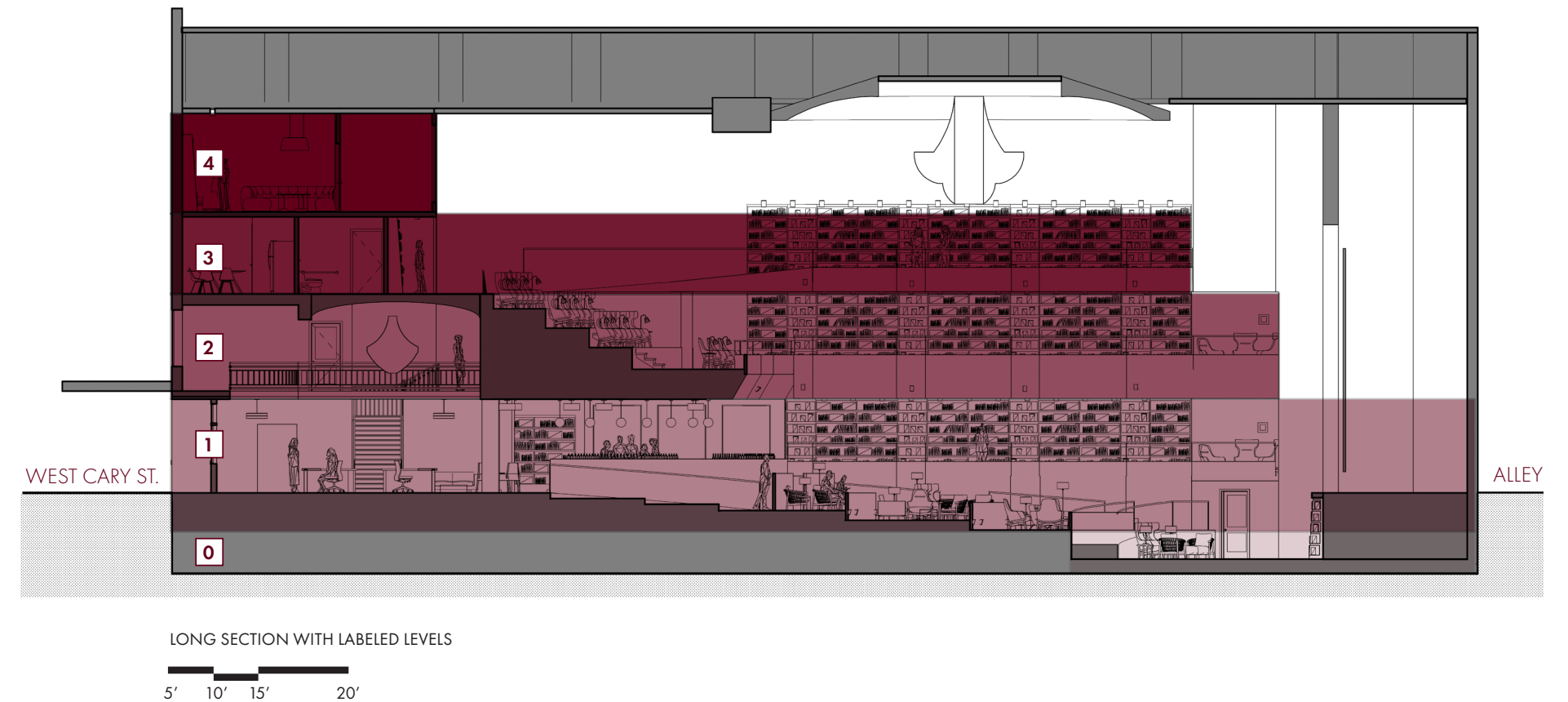
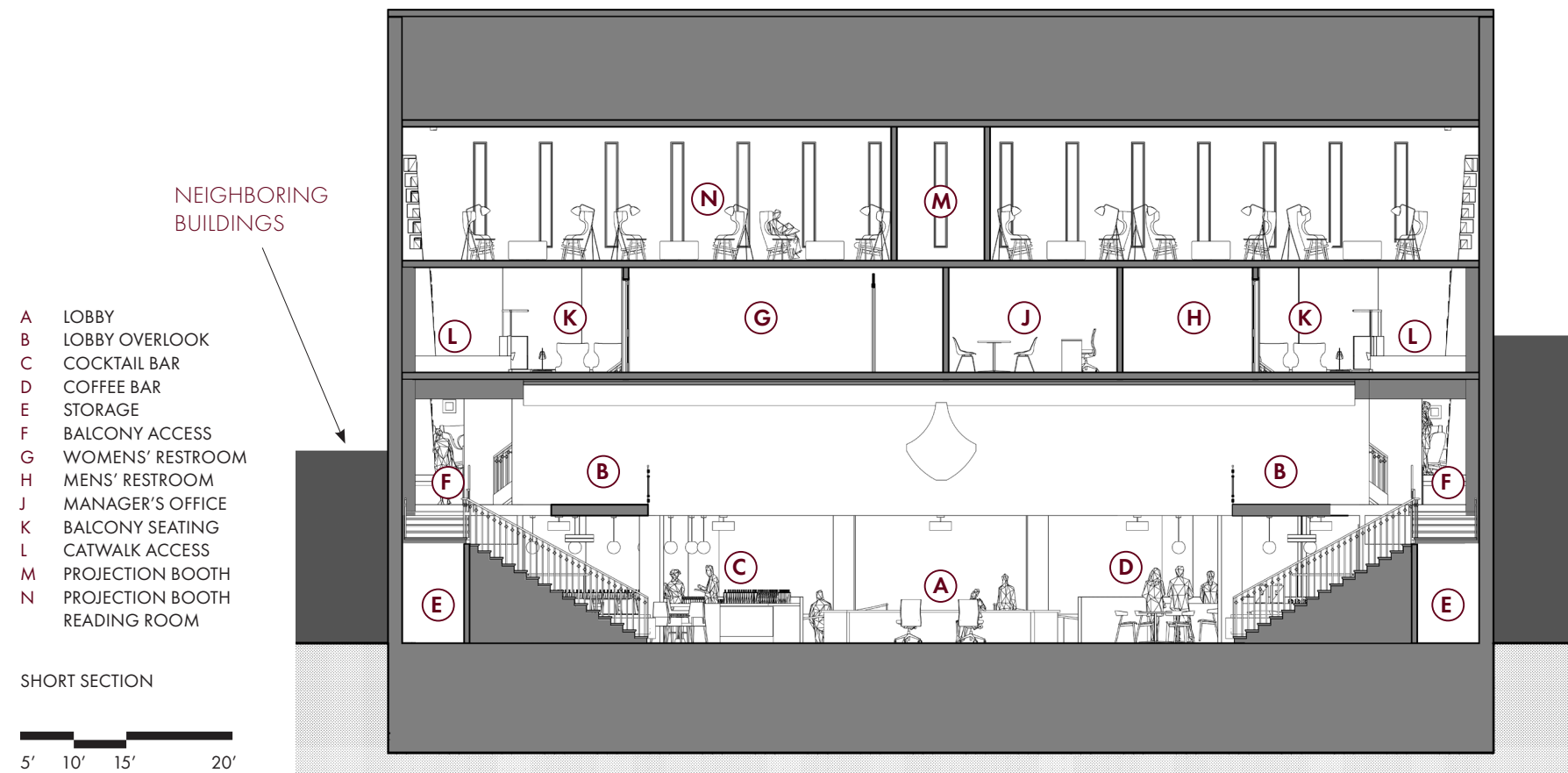
LEVEL 4 FLOOR PLAN



- A LOBBY
- B LEVEL 2 LOBBY
- C COCKTAIL BAR
- D AUDITORIUM
- E SCREEN & STAGE
- F CATWALK 1
- G CATWALK 2
- H CATWALK 3
- J BALCONY SEATING
- K STAFF AREA
- L RESTROOMS
- M READING ROOM
- N PROJECTION BOOTH

LONG SECTION





LOBBY

The Lobby is a transitional space from the busy Carytown sidewalk into the opulent Byrd. The materials are less textured and cozy than other spaces because this is predominantly a circulation space and not somewhere to spend a long time.

The addition of more windows across the front of the Byrd was meant to let in more natural light and create a welcoming vibe. It is a public library and the public is meant to feel invited inside.

The Reception Desk is large and oriented in two directions for its many purposes. It is used for ticket sales and for book check out and return. It is also where visitors can ask question of the staff or request help finding a book or navigating the building.

Stone on the walls is inspired by the original Byrd ornamentation and the monochromatic palette is too. The stone color on floor is meant to feel like a luxurious continuation of the sidewalk

The space preserves the Byrd’s original ceiling ornamentation, chandelier and murals.



COCKTAIL BAR

Spilling into the Lobby are the Cocktail Bar and Coffee Bar. These spaces serve coffee, cocktails and light snacks on an extended platform oriented to overlook the Auditorium. There is no level change (only a flooring change) between the lobby and the bars. The bars have a much lower, more intimate ceiling height as they are underneath the balcony and flank the entrance into the Auditorium.

Comfortable upholstered seating and marble-topped bar-height tables are available for enjoying a cocktail while seated or standing. The Cocktail Bar is a monochromatic green gem tucked under the balcony.





AUDITORIUM

Enter the Auditorium by passing under the Balcony down either of the grand ramps or the central stair. Come out from under the balcony overhead to a 47' high space surrounded by books, opulence and history.

Andrea Quilici, architect of the Varina Library, said people sit comfortably in different ways so this space was designed with a variety of seating options available. All chairs selected were ones that would be comfortable to be in for 2+ hours while watching a movie or reading.

The furniture is arranged in small groups to create the feeling of numerous little living rooms. The half walls between levels are used to increase the feeling of intimacy in such a large space.



VIEW FROM STAGE

As opposed to the original Byrd theater, this design is fully ADA accessible with ramps and landings connecting each tier of the auditorium space. The auditorium is 4 tiers separated by half walls and connected by short stairs and ramps.

The lighting of the space creates a unique ambiance. Table and floor lamps provide task lighting and in-floor lights and wall-mounted sconces provide circulation path lighting. Wall washers illuminate the books surrounding the space. The grand historic chandelier provides ambient lighting above.



BOOK CATWALK

Books are displayed in two ways – spines out and covers out on custom-designed book shelves. The shelves and catwalks respond to the tripartite rhythm of the existing ornamentation and structure.

The tiered balcony seating is an ideal space to watch a movie or read a book alone. This space is quieter than the seating on Level 1 because high-backed chairs are arranged all facing one direction instead of in clusters.

Tucked behind another row of books above the tiered seating are necessary spaces like the staff break room, manager's office and restrooms.

PROJECTION BOOTH READING ROOM

Cantilevered over Level 3 is the Projection Booth Reading Room. Long narrow windows overlook the Auditorium and balcony below. One must take the fire stair (or elevator) to reach it. This space is special because it is hidden and visitors may only know to go looking for it because they saw a photo of it online or a friend told them about it.

This space is for reading and quiet conversation. Soft seating and oversized pendants make this a cozy tucked away oasis in the middle of Carytown.



AUDITORIUM FF&E

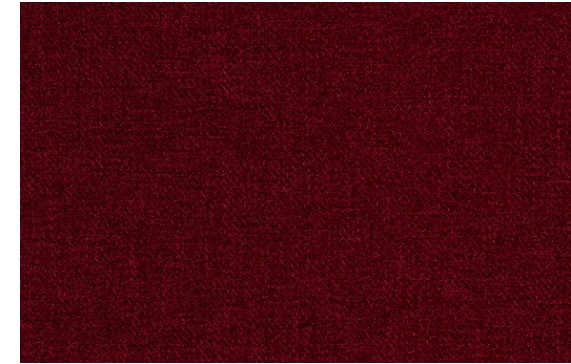
The materials strategy was based on the overall design concept: What does the Byrd want?

The Byrd Theatre wants monochromatic vignettes in jewel tones, historic references and highlights of its existing materials palette like gold accents, stone, rich fabrics, patterns, and sparkle.

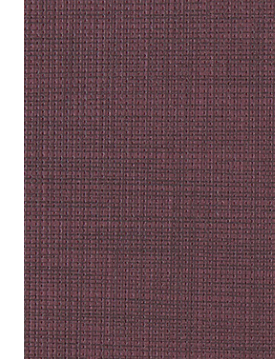
This is a place for diversion and amusement, so the material strategy incorporates playful moments too.

Other color palettes were tested in the auditorium but it was clear that the Byrd wanted to be red. So, the predominant color remained red with purple, brown and gold accents to add some dimension.

The furniture selection is contemporary but with historic nods to the wing back chair and the Mies van der Rohe Krefeld lounge chair.



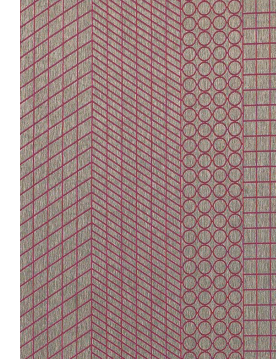
MAHARAM MURMUR UPHOLSTERY
IN SANGRIA



MAHARAM NIMBLE
UPHOLSTERY IN CROCUS



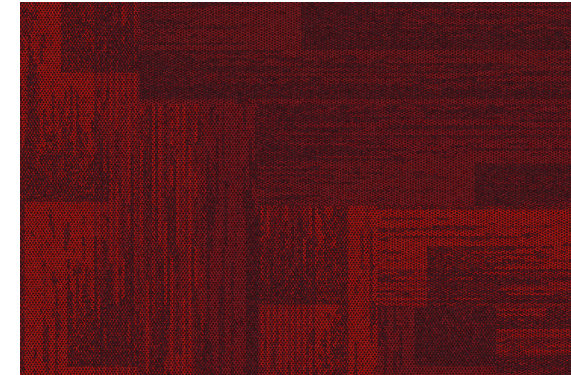
MAHARAM BALM LEATHER
UPHOLSTERY IN VICEROY



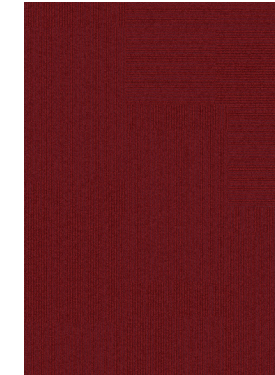
MOMENTUM GUIDELINE
UPHOLSTERY IN RAZZ



NERO MARQUINA
MARBLE



INTERFACE CARPET AERIAL COLLECTION
IN BERRY HERRINGBONE



INTERFACE CARPET ON
LINE COLLECTION IN BERRY



METAL PANELING
IN BRONZE



LIBERTY LONDON WALL
COVERING IN DRAGONFLY



KNOLL DIVINA
LOUNGE CHAIR



HERMAN MILLER
TRACE COFFEE TABLE



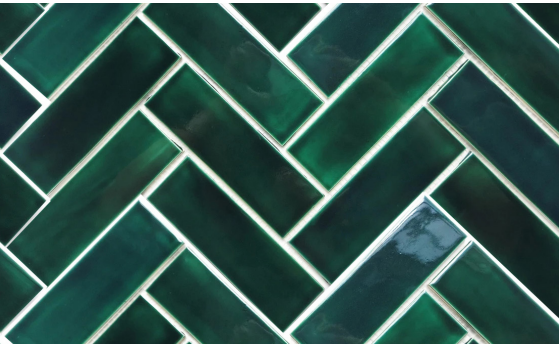
HERMAN MILLER
REFRAME CHAIR



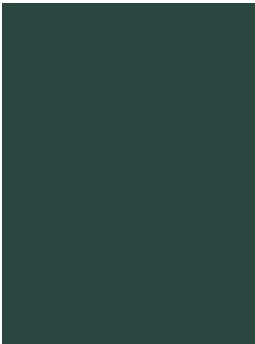
HERMAN MILLER
REFRAME CHAIR WINGBACK

COCKTAIL BAR FF&E

The Cocktail Bar is a predominantly emerald color palette with walnut, bronze and black marble accents. The deco-inspired upholstery is a contemporary pattern with a historic 1920's twist. Comfortable upholstered seating elevates this bar from other bars in Carytown and allows it to integrate into the opulent Byrd.



MERCURY MOSAICS 2X6 TILE
IN BLUEGRASS AND HERRINGBONE PATTERN



BENJAMIN MOORE
HUNTER GREEN PAINT



NERO MARQUINA MARBLE
TABLE TOPS



BRONZE TABLE LEGS



WALNUT BAR



DIVINE SAVAGES DECO MARTINI UPHOLSTERY FABRIC
IN ARSENIC



PRECEDENT FOR CUSTOM SMOKY
ANTIQUE MIRRORS



BERNHARDT
ZOE STOOL



BERNHARDT
FORUM CHAIR



WEST ELM WORK
MAISIE TABLE

READING ROOM FF&E

The Projection Booth Reading Room is predominantly made up of a rich blue color palette. Rich sapphire-colored velvet couches are coupled with monochromatic patterned carpet, rich blue walls and blue tinged ceilings. Playful patterned wallpaper defines the space: Hollywood glamor of a 1920's movie theater embodied in an ostrich showgirl.



DIVINE SAVAGES ZSA ZSA WALL COVERING



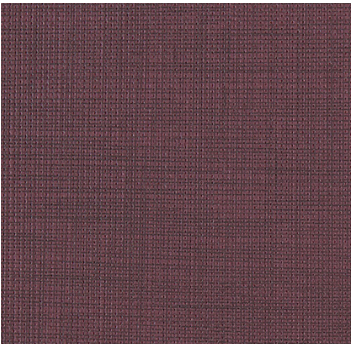
SCHUMACHER VENETIAN SILK VELVET
UPHOLSTERY IN INDIGO



NERO MARQUINA
MARBLE TABLE TOPS



BRONZE TABLE LEGS



MAHARAM NIMBLE UPHOLSTERY
IN CROCUS



MILLIKEN CARPET MORAINÉ COLLECTION
IN EXPLORER



WEST ELM WORK
BELLE SECTIONAL



WEST ELM WORK
MAISIE TABLE



EUREKA APERTURE 36"
CEILING FIXTURE



HERMAN MILLER
REFRAME CHAIR

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

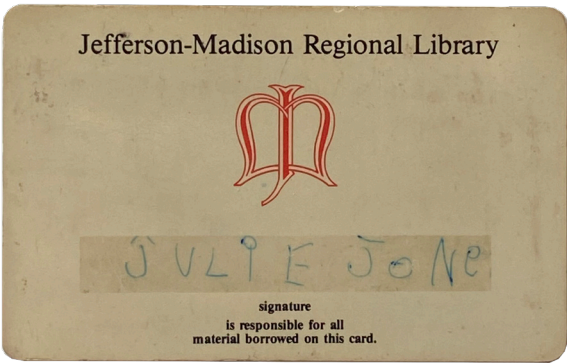


Fig. 76 Julie (Jones) Mishler’s First Library Card circa 1992

Thank you to my dear, dear husband, Evan, our dog, Lady, and my parents, Clair & Richard, for supporting me through this outrageous pivot.

Thank you to the Byrd Theatre for the inspiration and to the Byrd Theatre Foundation, particularly Susan Reed and Todd Schall-Vess, for drawings and history lessons. Thank you to the local library design experts, Shannon Wray and Andrea Quilici. Thank you to the Interiors studio at Glavé & Holmes Architecture for your guidance and support.

Thank you to VCU for teaching me a new way of thinking and especially Camden Whitehead, Sara Reed, Roberto Ventura and Nicole Lee.

REFLECTION



Fig. 77 Julie Mishler, Author, in front of the Byrd Theatre on April 29, 2020 amid the ongoing coronavirus pandemic

The thesis defense presentations this year were done over Zoom video conference due to the ongoing worldwide coronavirus pandemic. The faculty committee members each dialed in from their homes as little video squares on my computer screen. From my kitchen island, I presented digital slides instead of physical boards. The show must go on and we made the best of an unprecedented situation.

Key questions asked during the defense presentation were about opulence, ornamentation, and railing and wall design. What is the difference between opulence in 1928 and opulence in 2020? Are they in conversation or dictation? Could the lattice detail of the stage-surround existing ornamentation been incorporated into the newly introduced railings or low walls? Could the wall ornamentation above the books been revealed more through shorter book shelves or added transparency? Could more opportunities to sit or pause been built into the low walls, railings or book shelves?

It has been an unconventional end to an experience that oftentimes felt like whitewater rafting through Class V rapids. I managed to stay in the boat and keep paddling.

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